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ABSTRACT

This report presents the findings of a study conducted for the U.S. Department of Education that analyzed 17 family education programs for disadvantaged families. In-depth studies were conducted on-site for 7 programs; an additional 10 programs were studied via telephone interviews. An "Executive Summary" of eleven pages (also separately published) precedes the body of the report. The body of the report is organized around major challenges faced by the programs. These include: (1) recruiting families, which involves a number of targeting choices and recruitment methods; (2) sustaining family participation, which involves several design components, an array of services, and sensitive interaction between parents and staff; (3) staffing programs, which involves determining the type and number of staff, staff qualifications, and staff training; (4) establishing a curriculum, which involves choosing methods of instruction that work with families and being sensitive to family differences; (5) collaborating with public schools; and (6) evaluating programs. The report concludes with an itemization of strategies that these successful programs use to meet these challenges. A list of 32 references is included. Appendixes provide a description of the study methodology; descriptions of the 7 programs studied on-site and 10 programs studied by telephone interview; and a list of program contacts. (BC)

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# WORKING WITH FAMILIES

## Promising Programs to Help Parents Support Young Children's Learning

## Summary of Findings

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Prepared Under Contract by:

Abt Associates Inc.
Cambridge, MA

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# WORKING WITH FAMILIES

## Promising Programs to Help Parents Support Young Children's Learning

## Summary of Findings

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February 1991

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Contract LC 8808901

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# PREFACE

This report presents the summary findings from a study conducted by Abt Associates Inc. during 1988-90 for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation. This volume describes the general findings from an analysis of seventeen promising family education programs for disadvantaged families.

The impetus for this study was the U.S. Department of Education's interest in improving the school achievement of disadvantaged children. In particular, the Department wanted a picture of current promising approaches in transition and family education programs for ensuring that gains achieved in preschool are maintained in elementary school. The Department was particularly interested in programs that involve the public schools. The Department contracted with RMC Research Corporation to conduct a study of transition programs to ease discontinuities between preschool and elementary school, and with Abt Associates Inc., as a subcontractor to RMC, to describe innovative family education programs designed to help disadvantaged parents of young children be more effective in supporting their children's learning and development.

During the course of the study of family education, data were collected on seventeen programs located throughout the country. In-depth case studies were conducted at seven of the programs through on-site interviews and observations. Telephone interviews were conducted with the directors of the other ten programs. The study is based on extensive descriptive information collected about these diverse programs that provide family education for parents of young children.

There are a number of people we would like to acknowledge. First, the data collection activities would not have been possible without the assistance and cooperation of the program sites. Program staff were willing to describe their programs, share program materials, and discuss frankly the challenges they face in working with families and schools. Gratitude also is owed to staff at each site who organized the case study visits and to the staff, parents, school administrators and teachers who agreed to meet with us and provide detailed information about the programs.

Special thanks are extended to the members of the study's advisory panel: Stephen Barnett, Temple University; Barbara Bowman, Erikson Institute; Ellen Galinsky, Bank Street College; Walter Hodges, Georgia State University; Sharon Lynn Kagan, Yale University; Mary Kennedy, Michigan State University; Douglas Powell, Purdue University; and Herbert Walberg, University of Illinois. Their assistance in conceptualizing the study, identifying promising programs, and reviewing the study reports has been invaluable. We also would like to thank staff at the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation for their guidance and suggestions throughout the study. We also are grateful to the many researchers and practitioners who provided us with nominations of promising family education programs.

Abt Associates staff who conducted this study are: Barbara D. Goodson, the project director; Janet P. Swartz and Mary Ann Millsap, who participated in the study design, data collection activities and report writing; and Susan Spielman and Marc Moss, who helped conduct the site visits and telephone interviews. Eileen Fahey was in charge of production. Diane D'Angelo of RMC Research Corporation also helped conduct the site visits.

Although we want to recognize the invaluable assistance provided by others, the contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the authors.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation commissioned this study to identify and describe promising strategies in family education. Their interest reflects the recognition that family education is a way of strengthening families and improving their capacity to support their children's growth and achievement. Concern with student development and achievement, especially among children in poor families, underlies the need for information on family education practices.

This report presents the results from an in-depth study of promising family education programs that are working with low-income families. The study examines seventeen family education programs selected from a pool of programs identified in a national search as promising and innovative. Each of the programs has some evidence of impact on children or families; in addition, they share other indicators of success--operating for two or more years, being implemented in multiple sites, and having established strong, positive reputations in their communities. The study focuses on a particular category of family education programs: those that work with parents with the primary goal of enhancing children's cognitive development and school-related achievement. Among these programs, we selected those that (1) target families with children between 3 and 8 years of age; (2) target or serve large numbers of low-income families; and (3) are linked with the public schools.

## DESCRIPTION OF FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The study collected detailed information from seventeen family education programs. Seven programs, which represent a variety of fully implemented models for families of preschool and early elementary students, were studied in-depth through on-site visits. Data collection methods included observations of program activities and interviews with program staff, local school staff, and participating parents. The remaining ten programs, which were examined through telephone interviews with program staff, were also identified as promising models but were less fully implemented or evaluated. Below the seven in-depth sites are briefly described, followed by the programs examined through telephone interviews.

### Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)
### Minnesota Department of Education

ECFE is a state-funded, center-based program designed for children from birth to kindergarten which operates in more than 300 school districts in Minnesota. The program is available to all families, with the goal of serving hard-to-reach families in proportion to their representation in the community. On average, parents and their children spend two hours a week at centers located in housing projects, low-income apartments, store fronts, and former elementary schools. Classes include parent-child activities supervised by early childhood educators, parent-to-parent discussions facilitated by a parent educator, and children's activities to promote cognitive and motor development.

### Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
### Miami, Florida

HIPPY is a home-based program for parents of children four and five years old that is designed to encourage economically or educationally disadvantaged parents to teach their young children school readiness skills at home. The program began in Israel in 1969 and was brought to the United States in 1984. The core HIPPY program consists of home visits every other week, during which the paraprofessional "Parent Partners" work with parents on sequenced activity units that parents complete with their children on a daily basis. Most Parent Partners are graduates of the program. Individual home visits are supplemented by group meetings held on alternate weeks at neighborhood elementary schools. There are 30 lessons for each year structured around key school readiness and cognitive skills such as visual and auditory discrimination, eye-hand coordination, and spatial perception. For each age group, the lessons include reading and discussing nine children's books that are given to families.

### Project Home Base
### Yakima, Washington

Project Home Base, operated by the Yakima School District as one component of the district's Early Childhood Center, is designed for disadvantaged families with preschool children who have been identified as having developmental delays. The program is an adaptation of the Follow Through Parent Education model developed by Ira Gordon. Parent educators, many of whom are former teachers, make weekly visits to families' homes, working with the parent and child for 45 to 60 minutes. These visits focus on a set of home activities designed to enhance parents' teaching and parenting skills and to develop children's cognitive skills, particularly language and perceptual-motor development. Home visits are supplemented by special events and occasional workshops.

### Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project
### Louisville, Kentucky

The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project is a full-day, center-based program for parents and their preschool children. The program is funded primarily through grants from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and is an adaptation of the PACE (Parent and Child Education) Program developed by the Kentucky Department of Education. The Kenan model builds on four activities: preschool for children; adult basic education for parents; Parents and Children Together (PACT); and Parent Time (PT). Parents and children attend the program together three days a week for a full school day (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.). For three hours in the morning, the children attend a cognitively oriented preschool program based on the High/Scope model, while their parents receive instruction in adult basic education and literacy. For at least 45 minutes a day, the parents and children play together during PACT time, with the adult education and early childhood teachers present to facilitate interaction and learning. While the children nap, parents meet for Parent Time to discuss issues, such as parenting, child development, home activities, and personal care and growth.

### Project AHEAD (Accelerating Home Education and Development)
### Los Angeles, California

Project AHEAD is a parent-to-parent program serving disadvantaged families of children attending schools in the Ten Schools Program of the Los Angeles Unified School District, which have only minority students enrolled and are under court order to receive supplemental services to offset the effects of racial isolation. AHEAD was developed in 1977 by the Martin Luther King Legacy Association (MLKLA) of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Los Angeles and currently is operated and funded jointly by the MLKLA and the Los Angeles Unified School District. Project AHEAD's parent educators, indigenous to the community and parents of successful school children, make biweekly home visits and facilitate monthly parent cluster meetings in the schools. The curriculum is based on the work of Dorothy Rich, who subsequently incorporated the ideas into a book entitled Megaskills. Parent educators introduce home activities that guide parents in helping their children develop critical skills for success ("megaskills"), such as responsibility and self-esteem. In addition, the program works with parents on school-related topics such as reviewing report cards and preparing for parent-teacher conferences.

### McAllen Parental Involvement Program
### McAllen, Texas

The Parental Involvement Program, operated by the McAllen Independent School District, began with a single parent coordinator funded through Chapter 1 and now employs five parent involvement coordinators and five community aides funded through a combination of federal and local monies. Three parent involvement activities form the core of the McAllen program: STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting), and its Spanish version PECES, are commercially available curricula to strengthen parenting skills; Evening Study Centers operate two evenings a week in three school sites to offer classes for at risk students and their parents; and group parent meetings on a variety of topics such as health, school curriculum, and child development take place throughout the year at each school in the district.

There also are several broad-based programs and activities in the district that encourage parental participation in their children's education, including a parent contract, a weekly radio talk show, and school volunteer programs. In addition, individual schools choose additional parental involvement projects, such as Project Self-Esteem, lunches for parents and grandparents, and newsletters. Community involvement in public education is facilitated by the Partners in Excellence Program in which local businesses adopt a school and provide materials and in-kind contributions for school activities.

### Family Study Institute
### Chicago, Illinois

The Family Study Institute (FSI) is a division of the Academic Development Institute, a nonprofit corporation based in Chicago and supported by private grants and donations. FSI has developed two parent education courses, Studying at Home and Reading at Home, designed to be adopted by individual elementary schools and offered on a voluntary basis to parents. The courses focus on helping parents establish a home environment that encourages learning and academic achievement, such as setting up a regular time and place for studying, discussing school objectives and assignments at home in family meetings, and participating in family reading activities. Each course consists of three weekly 60- to 90-minute group sessions at a school supplemented by weekly activities that parents do at home. Volunteer parents lead the sessions, guiding small groups of parents through written curriculum materials and facilitating discussions of parents' experiences with the home activities. The course materials are available in English and Spanish, and parent groups are offered in a variety of other languages with the help of parent translators.

* * * * *

**Project FIEL (El Paso, Texas)** is an intergenerational literacy program that brings limited-English-proficient parents and their kindergarten children together to learn literacy skills. Begun in 1985, the program is administered by the El Paso Community College and operates in eight local elementary schools. Program activities are based on a five-step model that includes informal discussions to encourage oral language, concrete learning experiences to extend oral language usage, story writing, reading books together, and at-home activities.

**Prestame una Comadre (Springfield, Illinois)**, which is Spanish for "loan me a godmother," is an extension of Head Start parent involvement that is targeted on migrant Head Start families identified as high risk and who have limited English proficiency. Begun in 1984, the program utilizes social workers or "family life trainers" who conduct home visits as often as three times per week to help parents increase self-reliance, learn about child development and educational opportunities in the home, and improve family functioning. Small group meetings are held weekly to discuss topics such as nutrition and family relationships.

**PREP (Mascoutah, Illinois)** is a program funded by the local school district for children who score poorly on kindergarten screening tests. Four-year-olds and their parents attend classes at a high school once a week for 90 minutes. While the children are in a preschool classroom, parents observe their behavior through a one-way mirror and discuss with a parent educator the skills or concepts involved in the children's activities. Parents also take activities home that teach their children school readiness skills, such as color and shape discrimination, listening skills, and motor coordination.

**Syracuse Prekindergarten Program (Syracuse, New York)** is an early childhood program for children ages three and four, with active parent participation. The program operates twenty sites in Syracuse and is funded through the New York State Prekindergarten Program as well as local school district monies. The children's program is offered four half-days per week; on the fifth day, parents participate in groups led by a social worker on topics of interest to parents (e.g., discipline, health issues) or in parent-child activities led by an early childhood teacher. Parents also are able to participate in a training program for classroom aides that requires working in the preschool classroom and attending a series of two-hour workshops.

**Academia del Pueblo (Kansas City, Missouri)** provides afterschool and summer classes to Hispanic children in kindergarten through fourth grade. The program was developed by the National Council of La Raza, which works with community-based organizations to improve education for Hispanic students, and operates at the Guadelupe Center, a multiservice organization in Kansas City. The program for children includes instruction in language arts, reading, and mathematics as well as enrichment activities for two and a half hours twice a week. For parents, the program offers monthly parent groups and classes in reading and family literacy three times per week.

**Family Math (sites nationwide)** is a program that brings together children in kindergarten through eighth grade and their parents to participate in problemsolving and hands-on math activities to reinforce and complement the school curriculum. The program was developed in 1981 at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkeley, to help children and their parents see mathematics as an enjoyable and active pursuit. Weekly classes lasting about an hour are held in four- to six-week cycles and are taught by teachers and parents who have received training to be Family Math instructors.

**Kuban Parent Involvement Program (Phoenix, Arizona)** was designed by the school administration and teaching staff to increase parent involvement in school activities and encourage home learning in an inner-city school district where the dropout rate is nearly 65 percent. Teachers run the program for parents of students in kindergarten through third grade. Parents attend quarterly training sessions that focus on the skills students learn in school, classroom objectives, and ways parents can help at home. Teachers also make home visits as needed.

**Parents in Touch (Indianapolis, Indiana)** is run by the Indianapolis Public Schools and consists of a range of activities to increase parent involvement and improve home-school communication, including activity calendars for children; student/teacher/parent contracts and work folders; dial-a-teacher telephone line available five nights a week to provide help with homework; parent line/communicator where parents can hear a recorded message about school activities; and a series of workshops on parent education. In addition, the district has implemented the Family Math as well as the TIPS-Math and TIPS-Science programs.

**TIPS-Math (sites nationwide)** was developed by researchers at Johns Hopkins University to involve parents in their children's mathematics homework, to increase communication between the home and school about mathematics work, and to improve students' mastery of mathematical skills. The structured materials include information to parents from teachers about classroom activities as well as a set of activities for families to complete at home.

**Activity Book and Toy Lending (ABT) Program (Maryland Department of Education)** is a set of activities, books, toys, and games that parents of children in preschool through second grade can use to reinforce and extend school learning. The program began in 1980 in Frederick County and is now available to all districts in the state through funding from the Maryland Department of Education. There are two modes of participation: the Club System, where parents sign a contract to work with their children at home and children receive a prescribed kit to take home weekly or biweekly, and the Check-Out System, where parents visit a resource center to take home materials to use with their children.

* * * * *

## Summary of Program Characteristics

Not only do these seventeen programs represent a variety of approaches to family education, but most programs also utilize multiple strategies in order to work effectively with families who have very different skills. Four programs use home visits as their core mode of service delivery; three of the four supplement home visits with group parent education and support services. Six programs use parent/child classes as the main parent education activity; four of these also hold parent education and support sessions. Five programs provide parent education primarily through group parent sessions. Each method of working with families offers both advantages and disadvantages:

- **Home visits** confer one set of advantages in terms of establishing an intimate, helping relationship between the parent and a teacher/advisor and providing an opportunity for one-to-one demonstration by the visitor of teaching methods and ways to interact with children; home visits also require relatively few group social skills.
- **Joint parent and child classes** provide parents with multiple role models through interaction with other parents, and provide the opportunity for staff to observe parent and child together and suggest alternative ways of teaching and interacting in an educational setting; classes do require parents to come to a center or school with their children and become part of a group.
- **Group parent sessions** provide the possibility for parent-to-parent support, group membership, and development of group process skills; however, group sessions may require parents to have the self-confidence to speak up in a group and relate to other adults.

Curricula and instruction also vary across the programs, and there is no evidence that one content or method is most effective or is best for all families. For most of the programs, the parent education curriculum builds on parent/child activities that are intended to encourage positive family interactions and to promote child development and achievement. A subset of programs have a set of predefined parent/child activities with accompanying written materials as the core of the curriculum. For example, HIPPY/Miami follows the curriculum developed by the national HIPPY program which includes 30 sequenced lessons based on key school readiness and cognitive skills. The curriculum for Project AHEAD is based on a set of monthly "Appetizers" or home activities linked to Dorothy Rich's Megaskills. Project Home Base has developed a collection of more than 200 home activities that parents can use to teach their children cognitive concepts and verbal skills. The Family Math program uses hands-on activities to encourage parents and children to work together on mathematical concepts.

These successful programs share a concern about being responsive to differences among families, and this is reflected in their curricula. Programs individualize and adapt curriculum and methods to family needs by providing bilingual staff and materials for non-English speaking families; addressing cultural values that relate to parent involvement in schooling; and being sensitive to crises and changes in the family's home situation that may require immediate attention.

## IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

The goal of this study was to describe and analyze the strategies that promising family education programs use to recruit disadvantaged families, sustain parent involvement, staff programs, and establish positive relationships with the schools. These topics were identified by a national advisory panel at the start of the study as key challenges to family education programs. The findings offer guidance for future program development and implementation.

## Recruitment

Recruiting disadvantaged families who have had limited or negative involvement with schools is a difficult task for family education programs. Programs that have as their goal to recruit the more isolated or hard-to-reach families have a harder time recruiting than programs with universal eligibility. To motivate and encourage families to participate, these family education programs employ a number of common strategies:

- **Use a variety of recruitment techniques.** The most common recruitment methods are current or former participants recruiting others in their neighborhood; brochures or letters sent home with school children; visits by program staff; door-to-door recruitment; and posters in community locations. Programs imaginatively distribute printed materials. For example, in the Kenan program, flyers and notices are posted at several large employers, in churches, housing projects, gas stations, social service agencies, and kindergarten registration. The Minneapolis ECFE program hangs banners from public buildings, announcing a name and telephone number to call.

- **Use person-to-person methods to encourage hard-to-reach families to participate.** All programs report that the most effective recruitment device is personal contacts, usually from people in the community. Personal contacts are particularly important for parents who have little positive contacts with schools, who are recent immigrants with no previous contacts with American schools, or whose cultural traditions have limited parent involvement in schooling. In Project AHEAD and HIPPY/Miami, recruitment is facilitated by parent educators who live in the community. In programs that do not hire staff from the community, links are made through individuals in schools, churches, housing projects, and community organizations.

- **Provide information that does not require advanced literacy skills and is available in languages other than English.** Brochures describing the programs are available in multiple languages. Furthermore, successful programs build on approaches that are familiar to the cultural groups being recruited, such as Spanish radio programs and neighborhood sound trucks.

## Sustaining Family Participation

Once families agree to participate, sustaining their involvement is the next challenge. Family education programs have developed combinations of design components, services, and staffing that encourage continued participation by families:

- **Maintain flexibility in program operations in order to be responsive to families by meeting parents at a variety of locations and times and accommodating the "temporary dropout" and re-entry of program families.** Project AHEAD and HIPPY/Miami both alternate individual home visits and group meetings in schools; ECFE centers include housing projects, low-income apartments, and store fronts.

- **Emphasize direct benefits for parents, including improved education and employment opportunities.** For example, a central focus of the Kenan program is its adult literacy component that helps parents work toward the GED certificate; McAllen offers English language classes; and Project AHEAD encourages parents to attend weekend literacy classes.

- **Define objectives for parents in concrete and realistic terms, beginning with objectives that can be quickly and easily achieved.** Immediate results are particularly important for families who are distrustful of school staff or who have had negative school experiences.

- **Be responsive to families' multiple needs, either directly or through referrals and personal ties with other public and private agencies.** Project Home Base arranges hearing tests and eye exams for participating families. In ECFE and the McAllen program, health information is presented at parent group meetings. Staff in a number of programs refer, and even accompany, families to neighborhood health centers for medical care.

- **Incorporate tangible rewards for participation, ceremonies and rituals, and products with the program's logo or motto.** Many programs use the program name, logo or motto on items such as stickers, balloons, pins, refrigerator magnets, ribbons, pencils, book marks, t-shirts, and coffee mugs. Project AHEAD gives each family a cardboard storage box and study carrel with the program's name and logo. HIPPY/Miami and FSI have graduation ceremonies, and the McAllen program presents certificates of participation for attending at least four STEP/PECES sessions.

- **Create an environment for parents to develop new friendships and social support, as well as to improve their own self-expression skills.** The ECFE and Kenan programs both emphasize the importance of providing parent support groups that are facilitated by project staff.

### Staffing

Staff qualifications and characteristics are identified over and over again as critical to high-quality programs. One of the most important staffing decisions is whether staff are professionals or paraprofessionals. Most of these programs employ some paraprofessional staff from the communities being served. A few of the programs use only paraprofessionals to work with families. Programs reflect the following staffing principles:

- **Recognize the value of hiring paraprofessional staff and community members who share the culture of the target population and are able to establish mutually respectful and trusting relationships with parents.** McAllen and Prestame una Comadre employ professional staff who are native to the community; HIPPY/Miami and Project AHEAD hire paraprofessionals from the community to serve as home visitors. A number of programs employ paraprofessional aides in preschool classrooms.

- **Enlist school staff to help operate the program, particularly in programs for families of elementary school students.** The districtwide parent involvement programs--McAllen and Parents in Touch--were developed by district staff and use district teachers to lead some of the family education activities. The Kuban and TIPS-Math programs depend on school teaching staff for program implementation.

- **Utilize paid staff to a greater extent than volunteers.** In general, few programs depend on volunteers as primary teaching staff. Two exceptions are the FSI courses and the Maryland ABT programs. FSI depends entirely on unpaid parent volunteers to lead the parent group sessions; the ABT program utilizes the district Chapter 1 liaison and parent volunteers.

- **Provide training for staff and the opportunity for ongoing, frequent staff communication.** All programs conduct regular inservice training, either weekly or biweekly, as well as more intensive training at the beginning of each year.

## Relationships with Schools

The involvement of schools in family education programs is a major development in the field, which offers certain benefits both for the programs and the schools. Advantages of the collaboration include:

- access to school resources, such as federal funding, administrative support, and in-kind donation of space and facilities;

- connecting with families, particularly in areas where the schools have a more positive image than other social service agencies, may increase parents' acceptance of the program and also lead to greater understanding by school staff of parents' attitudes and behavior. For example, in Project FIEL, staff report that program retention is higher in sites located at schools rather than separate centers because school staff encourage participation in the family education program. In HIPPY/Miami and McAllen, the fact that the parent educators work for the school district gives them more credibility and respect among families.

- linking homes and classroom instruction through parent group meetings and, less frequently, through home visits. TIPS-Math and Family Math were created to extend classroom instruction to family learning experiences. In Project AHEAD, parent educators review student report cards with parents and prepare them for parent-teacher conferences.

- providing activities to ease the transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten. For example, HIPPY/Miami staff bring children into kindergarten classrooms in the spring prior to school entry; ECFE is beginning to do the same in some districts.

In general, collaborations with school districts occur at the administrative level rather than the classroom level; close ties between the programs and classroom teachers are difficult to build. Other challenges that family education programs face in collaborating with schools include accomodating adults and very young children as students, sharing space and facilities, and adhering to district personnel regulations. To facilitate collaboration with the public schools, these programs:

- **Stress that family education is a complementary, not competing district goal.** For example, FSI staff make it clear to teachers that their parent groups are intended to help parents create a structured environment for learning that can be applied to any subject area, and not to teach content-specific material.

- **Build support for the program from district and school administrators.** In the Kenan program, school principals are involved in hiring project staff; in McAllen, parent involvement is a districtwide goal and one criterion for staff evaluations.

- **Acknowledge that the location of both the administrative offices and program activities make a difference in terms of district integration and support.** When program staff and activities are located within the main school or district space, programs seem to be better connected with other district programs than when housed in satellite space.

## Establishing Program Effects

With limited resources, programs typically collect information to document program activities and to indicate areas for program improvement. Few family education programs studied have carried out summative evaluations with rigorous, experimental designs. More extensive and rigorous evaluation research, which is badly needed in the field, will have to come from the wider research community rather than from the programs themselves.

The programs in the study, nevertheless, offer strong evidence that their approaches can be successfully implemented in sites other than where they were developed. Program experiences suggest some factors involved in successful transfer:

- an administrative organization or agency to provide technical assistance and staff training;
- adequate funding for program adoption; and
- well-developed curriculum materials.

### Future Issues and Challenges for Family Education

Discussions with program directors identified a number of future issues and challenges for family education:

- **developing stable funding both for program operations and for summative evaluation;**
- **designing training for paraprofessional staff;**
- **training school staff to work more closely and productively with disadvantaged and multicultural families;**
- **integrating family education programs into the existing K-12 curriculum in schools; and**
- **adapting to changing demographic trends.**

While the seventeen promising programs studied are only a subset of the many family education programs currently being implemented, including other strong models, they offer examples of how family education can be provided to diverse populations in a variety of settings. Examination of their implementation has provided rich information on principles of practice that are shared by successful programs. As the interest in family education, family involvement, and family-school cooperation grows, this information can provide a foundation for developing family education initiatives.

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# CHAPTER 1

# CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

Involving families in their children's education is the focus of intense policy interest and public enthusiasm. The rapid growth in the number and variety of programs that teach parents, especially low-income parents, to work with their children attests to this interest. Family education is currently perceived as a promising strategy for addressing a range of social issues affecting the status of families and children.

Concern with family education is evident at the federal, state and local levels. Several recent federal programs feature efforts to involve, support and educate parents of young children. Even Start projects provide adult basic education, parent education, and activities for parents and children together. The Comprehensive Child Development Program funds projects that coordinate services for poor families, including adult education, parent training, and early childhood education. The Head Start Program remains a model early childhood program in its comprehensive family services and opportunities for parent education and involvement.

A growing number of states also support family education initiatives. A 1989 survey of state education agencies reports a high level of state activity in parent involvement programs (Nardine et al., 1989). Examples of state-supported programs include the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) in Arkansas, Missouri's Parents as Teachers program, Kentucky's Parent and Child Education Program (PACE), and Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education Program (ECFE).

Establishing links between family education efforts and the schools also has become a priority, and local school districts are entering the family education arena. In a recent survey of school districts (Love et al., 1991), half of the superintendents reported that their districts sponsor at-home learning activities to support school objectives, and nearly 40 percent of superintendents reported district-sponsored parent education workshops and courses.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, programs reflecting multiple strategies to promote the participation of parents in their children's education have been implemented. A number of ways of categorizing the array of family education programs have been proposed (Gordon, 1969; Goodson & Hess, 1978; McLaughlin & Shields, 1986). Two broad approaches to parent involvement have been identified (McLaughlin & Shields, 1986): advisory approaches, in which parents are involved in program decisions primarily through advisory councils; and collaborative approaches, in which parents are involved as partners in their children's education. Further distinctions have been made among collaborative approaches: those that base their efforts in the home, helping parents take on the role of teacher for their own children, and those that provide parents a role at the school.

This study focuses on family education programs that employ collaborative strategies that are focused on enhancing the role of parents and the home in promoting children's development and achievement. In addition, the programs share a concern with strengthening parents' capacity to support their children's development and academic achievement. The study concentrated on programs that are linked to the public schools, which excluded most family education programs that are part of broad family support efforts sponsored by community or mental health agencies. Although the set of programs studied is only a narrow slice of the total universe of what are referred to as family education programs, a number of research studies have shown the impact of this type of family education on children's development and school achievement.

## Context for Family Education Efforts

Family education is not a new concept. It has a long history, from eighteenth-century pamphlets offering child-rearing advice, to national parent education organizations that were founded during the late 1800s and proliferated to over 75 private and public organizations during the 1920s and 1930s, to today's diverse array of family education programs. Educators and policymakers have long recognized the crucial role parents play in facilitating the development and achievement of their children and the importance of building the family's capacity to support children's growth (See Brim, 1959 and Schlossman, 1976 for historical review.)

Today's focus on family education follows two decades of increasing awareness of the importance of families in children's learning and development. A number of themes appear to underlie this interest in programs that work with families.

(1) **There is increasing evidence of deteriorating conditions for families with young children in this country.** Recent statistics about the status of children in the United States show that nearly one in four young children living in poverty (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1989; National Center for Children in Poverty, 1990). About 42 percent of poor children under six are white, 32 percent are black, and 21 percent are Hispanic. Minority children under six have the highest rate of poverty. More than half of the children living in single-parent families with a female head of household are poor.

Poverty "creates lifelong problems for most children born into poor families" (Layzer & Layzer, 1990). Poverty is a risk factor associated with a variety of negative outcomes (Schorr, 1988). Poor children are at greater risk of impaired health than are other children, including low birthweight, growth retardation and anemia caused by poor nutrition, lead poisoning, accidental injury, and the risk of prenatal drug exposure and exposure to AIDS (National Center for Children in Poverty, 1990). Poor children also face greater risks of educational disability, low achievement and school dropout (Hamburg, 1987). Helping poor parents meet their children's developmental needs is an important element in reducing the effects of poverty. Educators and policymakers see family education programs as one vehicle for assisting families, especially poor families, to support their children's development.

(2) **An extensive and expanding research literature indicates the influence of parent attitudes and behaviors on student learning.** Early studies show a correlation between a family's socioeconomic status, as defined by parents' educational, occupational, and income levels, and children's cognitive development and achievement (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks, 1972; Mosteller & Moynihan, 1972). Subsequent research provides insights into how characteristics of the family and the home environment mediate child development. The research indicates a "relatively strong and consistent association of the psychological environment of the home with child development and learning" (Graue et al., 1983). For example, in a 1983 study comparing high-achieving and low-achieving poor black children, Clark concludes that the child-rearing style of parents determines children's success; parents of high-achieving children communicate more often with their children, provide strong encouragement of school, and set clear limits.

Walberg and his colleagues describe a "curriculum of the home" that is associated with high achievement, including daily parent/child conversation, encouragement of reading, and interest in and support for academic growth. This work suggests that parents' behaviors towards their children are more strongly predictive of cognitive development than are such proxy variables as family SES and size (Iverson & Walberg, 1982; Walberg & Marjoribanks, 1976). Further, these parent attitudes and behaviors represent characteristics that may be affected by education and training.

(3) **Evidence of the effectiveness of early childhood programs that include parent education and involvement has stimulated continued development of family education programs.** The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a number of early childhood education initiatives that included substantial parent education as part of the intervention. Evaluations of many of these early intervention programs reported positive short-term

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effects on the children, as measured primarily by standardized achievement tests (e.g., Gray & Ruttle, 1980; Madden et al., 1976; Seitz et al., 1985; Slaughter, 1983; Travers et al., 1982; See Goodson and Hess, 1978 for a review of findings from 28 early childhood parent training programs). Additionally, Bronfenbrenner (1974) asserted that the evidence showed that parent involvement components enhanced the effectiveness of the early intervention.

More recently, data are accumulating on the short-term effects of intervention programs specifically focused on educating parents to help their children. A review of school-based programs for increasing the educationally stimulating qualities of the home environment of elementary students indicates that the programs have, on average, large effects on children's academic learning (Graue et al., 1983). A review of programs that involve parents in their child's reading development also suggests overall positive, short-term effects on children's learning (Becher, 1986).

Evidence on long-term effects of programs is weaker. There is no evidence that short-term improvement in children's cognitive skills is maintained after the program ends (e.g., Levenstein et al., 1983). However, there is evidence of long-term effects on other child outcomes, including reduced referral to special education (Seitz et al., 1982).

Particular interest in family education programs linked to schools is supported by correlational research literature indicating a relationship between family-school collaboration and student gains. For example, a research synthesis (Henderson, 1987) indicates a link between parental involvement with the school and students' scores on standardized tests. Involving parents in their child's schooling is proving to be one way to promote children's achievement and improve attitudes.

Although the knowledge base about the effects of family education is expanding, there is relatively little information about specific practices which could be used as guidelines for program development and implementation. The need for information is particularly urgent as the recognition of the value of family education programs broadens, the demand for programs increases, and institutions with relatively little experience in family education, such as the schools, undertake program development and implementation. The current study was designed to address this information gap.

## Description of the Current Study

**Study Objectives.** In light of the current interest in family education programs and the rapid growth of these programs, in 1988 the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation funded Abt Associates, Inc., under subcontract to RMC Research Corporation, to study family education programs that serve disadvantaged families. This study is intended to extend the knowledge base about family education by identifying and describing in detail a small number of promising family education models currently implemented with disadvantaged families.

The study focuses on describing and analyzing implementation strategies rather than on documenting program effects. The findings from the study are intended to be the starting point for a set of "implementation principles" that could guide future successful program development and implementation (see Becher, 1986). Since these principles are derived from observation and analysis of a small set of unique programs and are not yet empirically established, they should not be interpreted as prescriptions for success. However, the principles that emerge from the study represent some common lessons learned about implementation and practice, which may be useful to future program planners and practitioners.

**Study Sample.** The programs in the study were selected from a pool of programs identified in a national search as successful and innovative. Program success was defined initially on the basis of research findings on program impact. Although most programs have not been able to devote substantial resources to formal summative evaluation, all have some evidence of effects. The programs nominated share other indicators of success, including being in operation for at least two years (and most for five or more years), having been implemented in multiple sites, and having developed strong, positive reputations in the community and in the field.

Following the objectives of the Department of Education, the study focuses on programs that (1) target families with children between 3 and 8 years of age, (2) target or predominantly serve disadvantaged families, and (3) are linked with the public schools. In addition, in light of the broad array of program models and approaches, the decision was made to focus the study on programs whose primary goal is the enhancement of children's cognitive development and school-related achievement.

The programs in the study were not selected randomly but by nomination. Therefore, findings from the group of programs cannot be assumed to represent average tendencies across similar types of programs. Rather, they represent strategies and solutions being used successfully by a set of programs that have been sustained over time.

**Methodology.** The study called for in-depth case studies to be conducted on a small set of programs, in order to provide detailed information on program operation. Case studies were conducted in seven promising programs, and telephone interviews were carried out with an additional ten programs. This report presents the findings from a cross-site analysis of these seventeen programs, highlighting critical issues for programs to consider in working with disadvantaged families. The study methodology is described in more detail in Appendix A.

The programs selected for the case studies and telephone interviews are introduced in Chapter 2. More detailed descriptive information on each program is provided in Appendix B.

## Overview of Report

The remaining chapters present the study findings. The report is organized around the major challenges that family education programs face in implementation, which were identified at the beginning of the study by a national advisory panel. After an overview of the family education programs in the study, subsequent chapters address these challenges:

Chapter 3: Recruiting Families
Chapter 4: Sustaining Family Participation
Chapter 5: Staffing Family Education Programs
Chapter 6: Curriculum and Methods
Chapter 7: Collaborating with the Public Schools
Chapter 8: Evaluating Family Education Programs

The final chapter of the report summarizes the implementation lessons that emerge from the cross-program study and discusses some future issues for family education programs.

## CHAPTER 2

## OVERVIEW OF FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE STUDY

The search for innovative and promising family education programs for disadvantaged families uncovered a remarkable array of efforts that share a commitment to the families they serve and a belief in the inherent value and strengths of these families. Both the number of different programs and their creativity in developing ways to work with families are impressive. Even the small set of programs identified for this study represent a variety of approaches and philosophies about how best to promote the development of parents and children.

While later chapters of this report compare and analyze these family education programs, this chapter provides an overview of the programs' goals and activities. These brief program descriptions can only partially capture the energy, dedication and richness observed in the family education programs included in this study.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Exhibit 2.1 identifies the family education programs selected for this study. The seven programs that were studied in depth through on-site visits are listed first, followed by the ten programs examined through telephone interviews. Within these two study design categories, programs are classified according to the targeted population: programs for families of children three to five years old versus programs for families of children in the elementary grades. Within this four-way classification, programs are listed alphabetically. This order is followed in exhibits throughout the report: in-depth programs for families of preschool children are listed first, followed by in-depth sites for families of elementary students, telephone sites for families of preschool children, and telephone sites for families of elementary school students.

#### In-Depth Sites

This section provides brief descriptions of the seven family education programs where on-site visits were conducted. More information about these in-depth sites appears in Appendix B, with addresses of program contacts listed in Appendix C. In addition, vignettes about program activities appear in later chapters of this report, as illustrations of key discussion points. These vignettes are intended to provide concrete examples and to give a firsthand look at program activities.

## Exhibit 2.1
## Program Sites in the Study

### In-depth Sites

**Programs Targeted at Families of Children Age 3 - 5 Years**

- ECFE (Early Childhood Family Education Program)
  Minnesota Department of Community Education
  Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Robbinsdale and Lake Forest School Districts
- HIPPY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters)
  Dade County Public Schools
  Miami, Florida
- Project Home Base
  Yakima Public Schools
  Yakima, Washington
- Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project
  Jefferson County School District
  Louisville, Kentucky

**Programs Targeted at Families of Elementary School Students**

- Project AHEAD (Accelerating Home Education and Development)
  Los Angeles Unified School District
  Los Angeles, California
- Family Study Institute
  Reading at Home/Studying at Home Courses
  Chicago, Illinois
  Multiple sites in Chicago area
- Parental Involvement Program
  McAllen School District
  McAllen, Texas

### Telephone Sites

**Programs Targeted at Families of Children Age 3 - 5 Years**

- Project FIEL (Family Initiative for English Literacy)
  El Paso Community College/
  El Paso Public Schools
  El Paso, Texas
- PREP
  Mascoutah School District
  Mascoutah, Illinois
- Prestame una Comadre
  Illinois Migrant Head Start
  Springfield, Illinois
- Syracuse Prekindergarten Program
  Syracuse Public Schools
  Syracuse, New York

**Programs Targeted at Families of Elementary School Students**

- Academia del Pueblo
  Guadalupe Center
  Kansas City, Missouri
- Family Math
  University of California, Berkeley
  Sites nationwide
- Kuban Parent Involvement Program
  Kuban School
  Phoenix, Arizona
- Parents in Touch
  Indianapolis Public Shcools
  Indianapolis, Indiana
- TIPS-Math
  Johns Hopkins University
  Sites nationwide
- The ABT (Activity Book and Toy Lending) Program
  Maryland Department of Education
  All school districts eligible

### Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)
### Minnesota Department of Education

Designed for children from birth to kindergarten, ECFE is a state-funded program currently operating in more than 300 school districts in Minnesota. Program goals include supporting parents in their efforts to raise children, offering child development information and alternative parenting techniques, helping to create effective communication between parents and children, and promoting positive parental attitudes. The program is available to all families, with the goal of serving hard-to-reach families in proportion to their representation in the community. For this study, we visited sites in Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Robbinsdale, and Lake Forrest.

ECFE is a center-based program located in a variety of settings, including housing projects, low-income apartments, store fronts, and former elementary schools. On average, parents and their children spend two hours a week at the center. Some classes are age-specific (e.g., only four-year-olds) or group specific (e.g., teen parents, black parents, Hmong families, or "breaking the cycle of addiction"). All classes include parent-child interaction time, parent discussion time, and children's activities. Parent time is primarily parent-to-parent discussion, facilitated by a parent educator. Parent-child interaction time includes demonstration by the educators of positive and appropriate techniques for parents to use with children. Children's activities, overseen by early childhood educators, include discovery and cooperative play, learning to separate from parents, and activities to promote cognitive and motor development.

Early childhood and parent educators are licensed, and have teacher certificates and specialized advanced course work. Centers employ aides and volunteers who match the race and ethnicity of parents.

### Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
### Miami, Florida

HIPPY is a home-based program for parents of children four and five years old that is designed to encourage economically or educationally disadvantaged parents to teach their young children school readiness skills at home, and to hopefully continue their own education. The program began in 1969 through the work of Avima Lombard, as a project of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), at the Research Institute for Innovative Education at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel. The first HIPPY program in the United States began in 1984; today there are more than 30 HIPPY programs operating in eleven states. In this study, we visited the program run by the Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida.

Families who participate in HIPPY/Miami live in low-income areas of the city, generally do not have a high school diploma, and are either black (70%), Hispanic (20%), or Haitian (10%). As of the 1989-90 school year, 80% of Dade County's public school student population are minorities--46% Hispanic, 33% black, and 1% Asian or Native American. It is the fourth largest school district in the country.

The core HIPPY program consists of home visits every other week, during which time paraprofessional "Parent Partners" work with parents on sequenced activity units that parents complete with their children on a daily basis. Most Parent Partners are graduates of the program. Individual home visits are supplemented by group meetings held on alternate weeks at neighborhood elementary schools. Parents enroll in the program when their children are four years old and participate for two years. There are 30 lessons for each year structured around key school readiness and cognitive skills. For each age group, the lessons include reading and discussing nine children's books that are given to families.

### Project Home Base
### Yakima, Washington

Project Home Base is designed for disadvantaged families with preschool children who have been identified as having developmental delays. The program was developed and is currently operated by the Yakima School District as one component of the district's Early Childhood Center. Most participating families live in Chapter 1 attendance areas or meet the financial eligibility requirements of Head Start. Approximately 30% of participating children qualify for special education. Home Base draws from the greater Yakima area, rather than concentrating its services in the most disadvantaged sections of the city. Families typically stay in the program for two years.

Since 1971, Home Base has operated its adaptation of the Follow Through Parent Education Model developed by Ira Gordon. The Project Home Base parent educators, many of whom are former teachers, make weekly visits to families' homes, working with the parent and child for 45 to 60 minutes. The focus of these visits is a set of home activities designed to enhance parents' teaching and parenting skills and to develop children's cognitive skills, particularly language and perceptual-motor development. Home visits are supplemented by special events and occasional workshops. Home Base is part of the National Diffusion Network and has been adopted by 54 school districts.

### Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project
### Louisville, Kentucky

The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project is a full-day, center-based program for parents and their preschool children. The program is funded primarily through grants from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and is an adaptation of the PACE (Parent and Child Education) Program developed by the Kentucky Department of Education. The first Kenan program started in Louisville, Kentucky in 1987. In 1988, the program was expanded to include three sites in Louisville and four sites in North Carolina. In this study, we visited the three Kenan sites in Louisville operated by the Jefferson County School District.

The Kenan model builds on four activities: preschool for children; adult basic education for parents; Parents and Children Together (PACT); and Parent Time (PT). Parents and children attend the program together three days a week for a full school day (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.). For three hours in the morning, the children attend a cognitively oriented preschool program based on the High/Scope model, while their parents receive instruction in adult basic education and literacy. For at least 45 minutes a day, the parents and children play together during PACT time, with the adult education and early childhood teachers present to facilitate interaction and learning. While the children nap, parents meet for Parent Time to discuss issues of interest, such as parenting, child development, home activities, and personal care and growth.

Most of the adults are high school dropouts who are working toward the GED certificate. All of the families speak English as their first language. There is a maximum of fifteen families per site; participants include a mix of black and white families.

### Project AHEAD (Accelerating Home Education and Development)
### Los Angeles Unified School District, California

Project AHEAD is a parent-to-parent program serving disadvantaged families in the Watts section of south central Los Angeles. AHEAD works with the parents of children attending the Ten Schools Program of the Los Angeles Unified School District. These ten elementary schools have only minority students enrolled, and through court order, are receiving supplemental services to offset the effects of racial isolation. AHEAD was developed in 1977 by the Martin Luther King Legacy Association (MLKLA) of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Los Angeles and currently is operated and funded jointly by the MLKLA and the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Project AHEAD works with parents through home visits and parent group meetings. The goals of the program are to increase parental participation in and responsibility for the ongoing educational development of their children, to develop positive attitudes toward learning, and to promote effective school-home relations. AHEAD's parent educators, indigenous to the community and parents of successful school children, make biweekly home visits and facilitate monthly parent cluster meetings in the schools. The curriculum is based on the work of Dorothy Rich, who subsequently incorporated the ideas into a book entitled Megaskills. Parent educators introduce home activities that guide parents in helping their children develop critical skills for success ("megaskills"), such as responsibility and self-esteem. In addition, the program works with parents on school-related topics such as reviewing report cards and preparing for parent-teacher conferences. AHEAD also supports special events, including a mid-year skills event and a summer reading program.

### McAllen Parental Involvement Program
### McAllen, Texas

The Parental Involvement Program is operated by the McAllen Independent School District, located in the lower Rio Grande Valley seven miles from the Mexican border. The district has approximately 22,000 students, with approximately 63% from low-income families. More than 86% of the students in the district are Hispanic, and a large percentage of families arrive each year from Mexico with limited or no ability to speak English. Parent involvement is a priority goal of the district, established by the superintendent, and one criterion on which school staff are evaluated.

Over the past seven years, the Parental Involvement Program has grown from a single parent coordinator funded through Chapter 1 to the current staff of five parent involvement coordinators and five community aides, funded through a combination of federal and local monies. All parent involvement coordinators and aides are bilingual and Hispanic, and most grew up in southern Texas; as a result, staff share the same language and cultural heritage as the at-risk families with whom they work.

Three parent involvement activities form the core of the McAllen program:

- STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting), and its Spanish version PECES, are commercially available curricula to strengthen parenting skills;
- Evening Study Centers operate two evenings a week in three school sites to offer classes for at-risk students and their parents; and

- group parent meetings on a variety of topics such as health, school curriculum, and child development take place throughout the year at each school in the district.

Special outreach is made to include in these activities parents with limited English proficiency, migrant families, and parents of children in Chapter 1. Activities are held at school sites, private homes, and meeting rooms at the migrant housing project.

There also are several broad-based programs and activities in the district that encourage parental participation in their children's education, available to all parents of children in grades K-12. These include a parent contract, a weekly radio talk show, and school volunteer programs. In addition, individual schools choose special parental involvement projects, such as Project Self-Esteem, lunches for parents and grandparents, and newsletters. Community involvement in public education is facilitated by the Partners in Excellence Program in which local businesses adopt a school and provide materials and in-kind contributions for school activities.

### Family Study Institute
### Chicago, Illinois

"Studying at Home" and "Reading at Home" are two parent education courses designed to be adopted by individual elementary schools and offered on a voluntary basis to parents. The courses were developed between 1985 and 1987 by the Academic Development Institute (ADI), a nonprofit corporation based in Chicago and supported by private grants and donations. ADI covers approximately two-thirds of the cost of implementing the courses in a school. The program is operated by a division of ADI called the Family Study Institute (FSI).

The courses focus on helping parents establish a home environment that encourages learning and academic achievement, such as setting up a regular time and place for studying, discussing school objectives and assignments at home in family meetings, and participating in family reading activities. Each course consists of three weekly 60- to 90-minute group sessions at a school supplemented by weekly activities that parents do at home. Volunteer parents function as group leaders at the sessions, guiding small groups of parents through written curriculum materials and leading discussions of parents' experiences with the home activities. Training of parent group leaders is a two-step process. A Leadership Team of two parents and one teacher from each school attends a one-day training conducted by FSI. This team subsequently trains up to ten parents as group leaders.

The courses are not targeted on particular types of families or schools. However, the 50 schools in which they have been implemented are primarily Chapter 1 schools in low-income and minority neighborhoods. The course materials are available in English and Spanish, and parent groups are offered in a variety of other languages with the help of parent translators.

### Telephone Sites

The ten family education programs examined through telephone interviews are described briefly below. Additional information about these programs appears in Appendix B. Addresses of program contacts are listed in Appendix C.

- **Project FIEL (El Paso, Texas)** is an intergenerational literacy program that brings limited-English-proficient parents and their kindergarten children together to learn literacy skills. Begun in 1985, the program is administered by the El Paso Community College and operates in eight local elementary schools. Program activities are based on a five-step model that includes informal discussions to encourage oral language, concrete learning experiences to extend oral language usage, story writing, reading books together, and at-home activities.

- **Prestame una Comadre (Springfield, Illinois),** which is Spanish for "loan me a godmother," is an extension of Head Start parent involvement that is targeted on migrant Head Start families identified as high risk and who have limited English proficiency. Begun in 1984, the program utilizes social workers or "family life trainers" who conduct home visits as often as three times per week to help parents increase self-reliance, learn about child development and educational opportunities in the home, and improve family functioning. Small group meetings are held weekly to discuss topics such as nutrition and family relationships. The program operates in three sites and works with six families per site.

- **PREP (Mascoutah, Illinois)** is a program funded by the local school district for children who score poorly on kindergarten screening tests. Four-year-olds and their parents attend classes at a high school once a week for 90 minutes. While the children are in a preschool classroom, parents observe them through a one-way mirror and discuss with a parent educator the skills or concepts involved in the children's activities. Parents also take home activities to do with their children that teach school readiness skills, such as color and shape discrimination, listening skills, and motor coordination.

- **Syracuse Prekindergarten Program (Syracuse, New York)** is an early childhood program for children ages three and four, with active parent participation. The program operates twenty sites in Syracuse and is funded through the New York State

Prekindergarten Program as well as local school district monies. The children's program is offered four half-days per week; on the fifth day, parents participate in parent groups led by a social worker or in activities with their children and an early childhood teacher. Parents also are able to participate in a parent aide training program that requires working in the preschool classroom and attending a series of two-hour workshops.

- **Academia del Pueblo (Kansas City, Missouri)** provides after-school and summer classes to Hispanic children in kindergarten through fourth grade. The program primarily targets children identified by the schools as experiencing academic difficulty. In addition, the program provides enrichment opportunities for gifted Hispanic students. The program was developed by the National Council of La Raza, which works with community-based organizations to improve education for Hispanic students, and operates at the Guadelupe Center, a multiservice organization in Kansas City. The program for children includes instruction in language arts, reading, and mathematics as well as enrichment activities for two and a half hours twice a week. For parents, the program offers monthly parent groups and classes in reading and family literacy three times per week.

- **Family Math (sites nationwide)** is a program for children in kindergarten through eighth grade and their parents to participate together in problemsolving and hands-on math activities that reinforce and complement the school curriculum. The program was developed in 1981 at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkeley, to help children and their parents see mathematics as an enjoyable and active pursuit. Weekly classes lasting about an hour are held in four- to six-week cycles and are taught by teachers and parents who have received training to be Family Math instructors.

- **Kuban Parent Involvement Program (Phoenix, Arizona)** was designed by the school administration and teaching staff to increase parent involvement in school activities and encourage home learning in an inner-city school district where the dropout rate is nearly 65 percent. Teachers run the program for parents of students in grades K-3. Parents attend quarterly training sessions that focus on the skills students learn in school, classroom objectives, and ways parents can help at home. Teachers also make home visits as needed.

- **Parents in Touch (Indianapolis, Indiana)** is run by the Indianapolis Public Schools and consists of a range of activities to increase parent involvement and improve home-school communication, including activity calendars for children in grades K-6; student/teacher/parent contracts and work folders; dial-a-teacher telephone line available five nights a week to provide help with homework; parent line/communicator where parents can hear a recorded message about school activities;

and a series of workshops on parent education. In addition, the district has implemented the Family Math as well as the TIPS-Math and TIPS-Science programs.

- **TIPS-Math (sites nationwide)** was developed by researchers at Johns Hopkins University to involve parents in their children's mathematics homework, to increase communication between the home and school about mathematics work, and to improve students' mastery of mathematical skills. The structured materials include information to parents from teachers about classroom activities as well as a set of activities for families to complete at home. The program is designed to be easy to implement, and any school district in the country can adopt the program by obtaining the materials.

- **Activity Book and Toy Lending (ABT) Program (Maryland Department of Education)** is a set of activities, books, toys, and games that parents of children in preschool through second grade can use to reinforce and extend school learning. The program began in 1980 in Frederick County and is now available to all districts in the state through funding from the Maryland Department of Education. There are two modes of participation: the Club System, where parents sign a contract to work with their children at home and children receive a prescribed kit to take home weekly or biweekly, and the Check-Out System, where parents visit a resource center to take home materials to use with their children.

## Summary of Program Characteristics

Exhibit 2.2 presents characteristics of the seventeen family education programs in the study, including program size, populations served, and the type and frequency of program activities.

As shown in the exhibit, all of the programs have multiple components or approaches to working with families. To summarize:

- Four programs use **home visits** as their core mode of service delivery; three of the four supplement home visits with group parent education and support services.

- Six programs use **parent/child classes** as the main parent education activity; four of these also hold parent education and support sessions.

- Five programs provide parent education primarily through **group parent sessions.**

- In addition, nearly all of the programs use some form of **home activities** to supplement their in-person educational efforts. Two programs consist entirely of **home activity curricula** which

## Exhibit 2.2

## Target Population, Size and Program Approaches of 17 Family Education Programs

| | | | Program Approach | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *In-depth Sites* | Target Population | Number of Families 1989-90 | Home Visits | Home Activities | Parent/Child Classes | Group Parent Meetings | Child Classes |
| ECFE | Parents and their children ages birth - 4 years; all parents in the district may participate | Varies by district; Duluth – about 600 families in various programs | as needed | weekly | weekly | weekly | weekly |
| HIPPY/Miami | Parents who live in low-income neighborhoods and their 4- and 5-year-olds who are not in preschool | 125 families | biweekly | weekly | | biweekly (alternating with home visit) | |
| Project Home Base | Parents and their at-risk preschoolers | 360 families | weekly | weekly | | | |
| Kenan Family Trust Literacy Project | Parents without GED and their 3- and 4-year-olds | 60 families | recruitment | periodic make-and-take sessions | 3x/week | 3x/week (ABE & parent ed) | 3x/week |
| Project AHEAD | Parents and their children grades pre-K - 3 attending 10 lowest achieving, minority schools in Los Angeles | 160 families | biweekly | biweekly | | monthly | |
| Family Study Institute | All parents in the elementary school offering the course; implemented primarily in Chicago public schools | 40 families per school | | weekly | | weekly | |
| McAllen Parental Involvement Program | All families in the district with children K - 12; predominantly Hispanic, high proportion of migrant families | 2,500 families in core services | recruitment & outreach | periodic make-and-take sessions | | various programs (includes STEP) | |
| *Telephone Sites* | | | | | | | |
| Project FIEL | LEP parents with at-risk children grades K - 1 | 250 families in 8 schools | | weekly | weekly | | |
| Prestame Una Comadre | LEP Head Start parents with low coping skills and child with developmental delays | 18 families in 3 sites | 3x/week | weekly | | weekly | |
| PREP | Parents and their at-risk 4-year-olds | 50-60 families in 4 daily groups | | weekly | weekly (supervised observation) | weekly | weekly |
| Syracuse Pre-K | Low-income parents and their 3- and 4-year-olds | 900 children in 27 sites | annual | | biweekly | biweekly | 4x/week |
| Academia del Pueblo | LEP parents and their at-risk children grades K-4 | 50 children | annual | | 3x/week (cycle of family lit. classes) | weekly (LEP parents)<br>monthly (all parents) | 2x/week |
| Kuban School Parent Involvement | All families in elementary school, predominantly low-income | 100 - 150 per session | annual | 4x/year | | 4x/year | |
| Parents In Touch | All families in district and their children grades K - 12 | Unknown | | various courses | various courses | 90+ courses | |
| Family Math | Parents and their children grades K - 8 | Unknown; 11,000 instructors trained | | weekly | weekly (4-6 x in a cycle) | | |
| TIPS-Math | Parents and their children grades K - 8 | Unknown | | frequency varies by site | | | |
| ABT program | Parents and their elementary students | Unknown | | biweekly | | | |

are linked to school subject matter and distributed to parents to carry out at home.

As the descriptions indicate, all family education programs in the study work with economically and educationally disadvantaged families. However, across the programs there are differences in how services are targeted. Some of the programs, such as ECFE, offer services universally to all families in a district or catchment area. Although universal programs typically make special efforts to recruit families with greater need or special problems, participating families include many who would not be considered disadvantaged. Other programs target their services on disadvantaged families; and some, such as Project AHEAD and Prestame una Comadre, recruit some of the most difficult-to-reach families--those with low coping abilities or intergenerational poverty. Even the programs that target the most disadvantaged families do not recruit extremely dysfunctional families--those with chronic alcoholism, drug abuse or drug dealing, or severe child abuse. Programs refer these families to other professional resources, because the programs themselves are not equipped to serve as substance or child abuse treatment centers. Once supplemental services are arranged, some family education programs work jointly with other agencies to serve multiple stress families.

The challenges programs face in recruiting and working with disadvantaged families are discussed in subsequent chapters of this report. Issues related to multicultural parent groups and limited-English-proficient families surface in several of the chapters, under topics such as recruitment, retention, and staff qualifications.

# CHAPTER 3

# RECRUITING FAMILIES

## OVERVIEW

Recruiting families into these programs is a continuing challenge, which should be addressed in program design decisions. Among the central recruitment issues are the following:

- whether recruitment is universal or targeted at particular groups or types of families;
- how to match recruitment methods to target populations;
- the extent to which schools and other agencies will be involved in recruiting participants; and
- the extent to which recruitment activities play an ongoing role in program operations.

To motivate and encourage families to participate, these family education programs:

- Employ a **variety of recruitment methods,** but use **personal contacts in the community** to reach the most disadvantaged families.
- Make the program **responsive to families' needs.** A number of programs:
    - -- provide transportation and child care;
    - -- address multiple family needs (e.g., vocational training, housing assistance) through direct services or referrals; and
    - -- offer the program in accessible locations.
- **Build on families' concern for children's success in school.**
- **Emphasize that they are a service program.** Programs are presented to parents as a voluntary resource, not one aimed at "reducing deficits."
- **Enlist schools to play a major recruitment role** in programs for school-age children.

The issues and principles involved in recruitment are discussed in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

## CHOICES IN RECRUITMENT

### Universal or Targeted Recruitment

The ease or difficulty in recruiting families is related to the characteristics of the target families. Programs that have as their goal to recruit the more isolated or hard-to-reach families have a harder time recruiting than programs with universal eligibility.

The primary advantage of universal eligibility is the opportunity to develop a broad base of financial support for the program within the community. ECFE and the Early Childhood Center associated with Project Home Base are open to all children from birth to school age, and also are the only two early childhood programs in the study supported in part by a local tax levy. The McAllen Parental Involvement Program is open to all families in the district and receives widespread support from the local business community.

Although widespread support and stable funding help to sustain programs, difficulties may arise in securing the additional resources needed to recruit and serve hard-to-reach families. In one site with universal eligibility, a multiservice program for the most disadvantaged families was dropped, in part because of pending budget cuts but also because of waiting lists for centers located in more middle-class neighborhoods. This example illustrates a disadvantage of universal eligibility--program slots may be filled by middle class families or families who are already actively involved in school programs. Thus, if programs want to ensure space for hard-to-reach families, some targeted recruitment may be necessary.

Programs with targeted recruitment, however, must take steps to counteract the negative consequences of labeling. Among many programs visited, care was taken not to single out families as being particularly "in need." Rather, recruitment was targeted to all families in a given geographic or school attendance area. For example, AHEAD, FSI and HIPPY/Miami first identify neighborhood schools with a high percentage of low-income families as well as schools indicating low test scores and then recruit from among all families within the catchment area of those schools. Academia del Pueblo, originally developed as a program for Hispanic students having difficulty in school, has begun recruiting and serving gifted children, in part to counter a negative perception that the program was a remedial program.

### Matching Recruitment Techniques to the Target Population

Recruitment techniques strongly influence who participates in a program. Programs that recruit solely through written materials are likely to attract literate parents whose previous educational experiences are positive or at least neutral. Personal contacts appear to be crucial in recruiting families who are isolated by such factors as language differences, low income or family problems.

Furthermore, successful programs build on approaches that are familiar to the cultural groups being recruited. In one city, because sound trucks are frequently used in Latin American communities to inform people of upcoming events, they have been an effective recruitment method for the family education program. Spanish-speaking radio shows and announcements are another way to reach Hispanic families. Brochures describing the program often are available in multiple languages, and program staff who contact families speak the same language or are from the same ethnic group as the target population.

### Involving Schools and Other Agencies in Recruitment

Where schools have a positive or at least neutral image, the school may be an effective vehicle for introducing the program and for serving as a primary referral source. In other cases, where schools are rebuilding their ties with disadvantaged populations, program staff may need to serve as intermediaries between the school and the target population, with individual teachers referring children to program staff.

Other agencies also may refer possible participants, but generally do not play a direct role in recruitment. At the sites visited, program staff often reported that it is essential for them to emphasize their independence from other public services. To reach the most disadvantaged families, staff often explicitly mention when recruiting that they are not affiliated with public welfare agencies and child protective services. The most at-risk families are often leery of public programs for fear that welfare or other benefits will be withdrawn or that their children will be taken away because of child neglect charges.

### Role of Recruitment in Program Operations

Recruitment is an ongoing process in most programs visited, and program directors report that they devote a large share of program resources activity to attracting participants. Program staff encourage the continuing participation of families and also use program activities to recruit new families into the program.

The amount of attention focused on recruitment also is linked to the program approach. Programs that require more intensive participation by families have a harder time recruiting and are often less successful at achieving full enrollment than programs that ask for less time commitment from parents.

## RECRUITMENT METHODS

Many of the programs studied distinguish themselves by their ingenuity, resourcefulness, and persistence in recruitment. In this section, we describe the recruitment methods that they use.

### Variety of Methods

These family education programs use a variety of strategies to recruit families, as Exhibit 3.1 indicates. The most common are "word of mouth" from current or former program participants, flyers or brochures in schools, home visits, and invitations to program activities.

Printed materials are often the first recruitment device used to introduce a program, with initial interest followed up by personal visits. A common recruitment method is for schools to send families letters or flyers (in Spanish and English) that introduce the program. In HIPPY/Miami, for example, a letter with the elementary school principal's signature goes home with all school children, targeted on families with 4-year-olds. All parents who respond are visited by program staff who explain the program in more detail. Information about the program also appears in regular school newsletters, and special events are advertised through school announcements.

Programs imaginatively distribute printed recruitment materials. In the Kenan program, flyers and notices are posted at several large employers, in churches, housing projects, gas stations, social service agencies and kindergarten registration. The Minneapolis ECFE program hangs banners from public buildings, announcing a name and telephone number to call. These flyers and brochures serve multiple purposes, including a general information function for other audiences in the schools and the community.

### Importance of Personal Contacts

While printed materials may be the first line of recruitment, hard-to-reach families need more than written information to be attracted to the program. All programs report that the most effective recruitment device is personal contacts, usually

## Exhibit 3.1
## Recruitment Methods in Family Education Programs

| Methods | In-Depth Sites (N = 7) | Telephone Sites (N = 10) |
|---|---|---|
| Current participants or graduates of the program recruit others in their family or neighborhood | 7 | 7 |
| Brochures or flyers in the school (often sent home with the children) | 7 | 7 |
| Visits to the homes of prospective families | 6 | 3 |
| Ongoing program activities (ranging from home visits and regular parent group meetings to special events) | 6 | -- |
| School referrals | 5 | 2 |
| Door-to-door recruitment in key locations (such as housing projects) | 4 | 3 |
| Posters (usually in schools) | 4 | 1 |
| Flyers (usually in nonschool locations such as apartment buildings or neighborhood health centers) | 4 | 2 |
| Radio and TV ads | 4 | 3 |
| **Other methods:** | | |
| Newsletters | 3 | 5 |
| Annual fairs, carnivals or parties | 3 | 3 |
| Open houses | 3 | 3 |
| Medical and other agency referrals | 3 | 2 |
| Newspapers | 2 | -- |
| Churches | 2 | 1 |
| Table in WIC office | 1 | -- |
| Talks at PTA meetings | -- | 1 |
| Personal invitation from own children | -- | 1 |

from people in the community. Personal contacts most frequently come by "word of mouth" from current or former participants and from both professional and paraprofessional program staff. Personal contacts are particularly important for parents who have little positive contact with schools, who are recent immigrants with no previous contacts with American schools, or whose cultural traditions have limited parent involvement in schooling.

For programs targeted for the most disadvantaged populations, such as Project AHEAD and HIPPY/Miami, recruitment is facilitated by parent educators who live in the community. Other programs that do not have community staff tap into the community by identifying "natural helpers" from schools, churches, housing projects and community organizations. In Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program, where program staff are required to be certified teachers, there is a priority for community liaisons or early childhood aides with strong community ties.

### TAPPING INTO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH NATURAL HELPERS

At one center located in a housing project in Duluth, the Early Childhood Family Education Program first located a foster grandmother who had been with the county day care center for 12 years. The day care center had closed, leaving the isolated housing project with no early childhood education. After talking with the foster grandmother, the program staff contacted her daughter who ran the convenience store in the project and had a young child eligible for the program. Once these two were recruited (with the foster grandmother serving as an early childhood aide in the program), other families began to enroll. Now participating families spread the word about the program when they "know someone who really needs this."

Recruiting in potentially unsafe neighborhoods is an issue that arises for many programs serving disadvantaged families. Programs find ways to deal with safety issues in housing projects and other low-income neighborhoods. In areas with high rates of street crime and domestic violence, parent educators may go in pairs or call the central office at regular intervals. Programs also avoid days of anticipated crime. For example, because of frequent theft, one program no longer schedules home visits on the days welfare checks arrive.

## TECHNIQUES OF PERSON-TO-PERSON RECRUITMENT

HIPPY/Miami Parent Partners go door to door within target neighborhoods, asking each family if they have a four-year-old and if that child is in a preschool program. If not, they describe the HIPPY program. Staff also recruit families in parks and other neighborhood areas. Staff report that Saturdays are often the best time to recruit because families are most likely to be at home or in the neighborhood.

Each Friday, an ECFE parent educator distributes leaflets in a housing project and demonstrates one parent-child activity in the lobby. For the parents who stop by, she describes the nearby center. The Friday morning is known as "taking the show on the road."

In a Kenan site in Kentucky, the early childhood education aide accompanies the early childhood and adult education teachers on door-to-door recruitment in the housing project to meet with parents.

During home visits with parents and children in Project Home Base, other adults (usually relatives or neighbors) may sit in, provided they do not intrude on the formal lesson. The adults are then encouraged to come to parent meetings and participate in other parent activities.

Twice a year, the parent educators of Project AHEAD in south central Los Angeles knock on the doors of every unit in the housing projects. They estimate that they have to knock on 1,000 doors to get 30 interested parents. Throughout the year, instead of driving between home visits in the housing projects, Project AHEAD parent educators walk the streets, carrying Project AHEAD folders and greeting whomever they meet.

### Responsiveness to Families

Certain program features are designed to overcome barriers to participation and to make programs more responsive to the needs of the families they are recruiting.

**Accessible Sites.** These family education programs take place in sites that are acceptable and accessible to the target families. When necessary, transportation may also be provided. For families who are most distrustful of schools, alternatives to school sites are found. For example, in ECFE, centers are located in housing projects, converted one-bedroom apartments in low-income apartment buildings, and in store fronts on streets with heavy "foot traffic." In Project AHEAD, initial parent cluster meetings sometimes are held in community settings, with later meetings held in the school. Among the Hispanic population in McAllen, Texas, where the cultural heritage traditionally precludes mothers from activities outside the home, some activities are held in private homes, and others at a migrant housing project.

**Families' Other Needs.** Because many disadvantaged families face multiple stresses, it is important for family education programs to recognize these needs and take steps to resolve those that may be barriers to a family's participation. Most family education programs have strong linkages with social service agencies and offer referral services for counseling, employment training, and health and nutrition. (These linkages are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.)

Language and cultural issues also may be barriers to participation. Programs, such as HIPPY/Miami, McAllen and AHEAD, that rely strongly on staff from the community, address such issues directly. Most programs serving limited-English-proficient families have bilingual staff and materials available in other languages. (This is discussed further in Chapter 5.)

Family education programs also may provide social services such as clothing exchanges for families. Children's clothing was a recruitment issue in one site visited. In an ECFE Minnesota program, two nonhearing Hmong mothers arrived without their children to observe the center's program. When the early childhood educator asked if they would bring their children next time, one mother replied that it was too cold to bring her youngest child. Without a pause, the early childhood educator asked if they had a heavy coat for the child or other winter clothes and mentioned that there was a "clothes exchange" on the premises.

### Families' Concern for Children's Success in School

Highlighting program goals of enhancing children's success in school can be an effective recruitment strategy. Program directors noted that identifying benefits for children encourages parents to move beyond their own negative school experiences and reluctance to get involved. A number of parents interviewed noted that they began the program specifically because they thought it would be good for their children. For example, principals in schools that conducted the FSI courses commented that parents who otherwise are not involved with the school come to the course because they see it as a way to help their child. In a number of other programs, parents' recognition of the benefits for their children is one reason parents remain in the program.

### Emphasis on the Service Orientation of the Program

In describing their program to prospective parents, staff present it as a resource for parents, not one aimed at "reducing deficits." Recruitment methods focus on the role of parents as teachers of their children and the program's goal of supporting parents in helping their children achieve school success. To reinforce the program's service orientation, program staff emphasize the importance of not regimenting a program, not having registration on an established time schedule, and not giving the program a "hard sell" to disadvantaged families. Program staff typically do not rush disadvantaged families to make a commitment to the program, and, in some programs, do not request a commitment until three or more contacts.

### Encouraging Schools to Recruit Families

Schools play their largest recruitment role in family education programs for school-age children. For example, in McAllen, Texas, one elementary school principal requires teachers to visit each student's family at the beginning of the school year. These visits are meant to serve as the first link between the home and the school and to make parents aware that the school cares about their child. In addition, the principal feels that it is important for teachers to see the child's home environment, to understand the resources available for learning (such as children having a quiet place to study). Staff from McAllen's Parental Involvement Program make subsequent visits to invite parents to program activities and to check in with parents they have not seen for a while.

For the Family Study Institute courses, school principals may ask teachers to identify children in their classes who would benefit most from the program and then call the parents of three of the children. Similarly, Academia del Pueblo enlists principals to refer children most likely to benefit from the program.

In Project AHEAD, the schools are slowly rebuilding ties with the Watts community. Although the school district administrative personnel make home visits, they often call upon Project AHEAD parent educators to visit families first or to accompany school staff on visits, because the families seldom open their doors to school or public agency personnel.

Teacher referrals also play a large role in recruitment in the school-based programs visited, with program staff then making home visits to the identified families. In Project AHEAD, for example, parent educators meet individually with teachers to help them determine ways they can work with parents. Teachers refer children who are having difficulties that appear home-based (such as not coming to school, falling asleep in class, and not having such rudimentary skills as knowing how to hold a crayon).

In family education programs for preschool children, schools are less involved in recruitment, except when districts do screenings on preschool children or refer families based upon older siblings' experiences in school, such as in Project Home Base and PREP.

When programs have well-established links with other social service agencies, referrals come from health agencies, child protective services, preschool programs in special education and Head Start, and social welfare agencies. Program staff then personally contact the families. Where images of other agencies may be negative, program staff do not cite the source of the referral.

# CHAPTER 4

# SUSTAINING FAMILY PARTICIPATION

## OVERVIEW

Once families agree to participate, sustaining their involvement is the next challenge. Family education programs have developed particular combinations of design components, services, and staff that encourage continued participation by families.

Some of the essential design components shared by these programs include:

- **Direct benefits for parents.** Although children are the ultimate beneficiary of the programs, all programs provide a direct benefit to parents, serving as a resource for them as individuals.
- **Multiple types of participation.** Programs accommodate varied skill levels of parents, including group process, interpersonal, literacy and language skills. Programs also provide support to help parents move from one type of participation to another.
- **Flexibility in program operation.** Programs accommodate to the competing demands placed upon families, by offering flexibility in scheduling, location of program activities, and participation.
- **Techniques to create bonds among parents and with the program.** To overcome the isolation, sense of powerlessness, and negative school experiences that often characterize disadvantaged families, programs use a wide variety of techniques to help parents identify with the program and see themselves as part of the group.
- **Activities focused on concrete and realistic objectives.** Some program activities are designed to show immediate effects on children and parents, to encourage parents to continue in the program.
- **Activities for children that build their enthusiasm.** The enthusiasm of children for their own program activities helps sustain their parents' participation.

Program services particularly important to families include:

- **A broad service orientation.** The case study sites either are full-service programs or have an extensive array of referral resources and linkages with other public and private agencies.

- **Continuous positive reinforcements.** Because many disadvantaged parents have had few successful experiences with schooling, programs provide positive support to parents on an ongoing basis.

Positive interactions between parents and staff are critical to the sustained involvement of families. Two staff qualities are paramount:

- **Personal respect and caring.** Program staff communicate their respect and caring for disadvantaged families to sustain their participation.
- **Sensitivity to the relationship between survival and educational issues.** Staff empathize with families as they cope with survival issues, and also are able to sustain a focus on the educational goals of the program.

The remainder of this chapter discusses in more detail these issues in sustaining the involvement of disadvantaged families.

## PROGRAM DESIGN COMPONENTS

The challenge of maintaining parent participation is greatest for the programs that set out to establish a long-term relationship with families in order to effect lasting changes in the family. Programs that work with families in more limited ways--less frequently and less intensively--do not face the same difficulties, since they require less commitment and typically do not recruit the more high-risk families.

The more intensive family education programs share a number of program design components that address issues of retention. These are described below.

### Direct Benefits to Parents

Each family education program visited has its primary emphasis on parents, to empower parents to become more successful teachers of their children. Program staff often spoke of building the self-esteem and confidence of parents as a necessary first step to parents helping children. Meeting parents' needs is incorporated into both home visits and group activities.

Home visits provide direct benefits to parents. Project AHEAD's home visits incorporate time to discuss parent issues before beginning the week's education activity. In the HIPPY/Miami program, after going over the week's activity packets, Parent Partners discuss whatever the parent wants to talk about, with visits reportedly lasting as long as two to three hours. In McAllen, Texas, home visits are designed to address those problems parents face that interfere with their participation in the school's program.

A central feature of the Kenan program is its adult literacy component. Excitement about the knowledge gained in that component is also an important element in retention, as described below.

### THE EXCITEMENT OF LEARNING

Many of the parents attending the Kenan Project realize that they made a major mistake by not continuing their education. One mother said that she "had run out of excuses" for dropping out of high school, particularly since she had a 13-year-old son with whom she was trying to stress the importance of education. She said she realized that she had to "practice what she was preaching"--she couldn't convincingly tell her son how important a high school diploma was when she didn't have one herself. Sending the right message to her son was an important motivator for this woman, who has four children and works; she switched from the day shift to the night shift in a nursing home so that she could attend the program. Now she talks more with her children about what they learned in school, because she is excited about the knowledge she is gaining. She said that she read about Louis Pasteur in one of the workbooks for the GED and learned for the first time that the word pasteurized had meaning. This mother described how she went home and excitedly shared with her children "what she had learned." She asked her children if they knew what pasteurized milk meant, and then shared her story about Louis Pasteur. This single parent related that she now listens to what her children have to say about what they learn in school. Whereas before she was often too tired after work and would just brush off their comments with "Yah, yah," now she and her children share more conversation about what each is learning in school.

Parent group meetings and other group activities usually have parent-guided discussion, especially if groups meet on a regular basis. Parent group meetings in ECFE, for example, are designed primarily for parent-to-parent interaction, with parent educators facilitating. The direct benefits to parents in the ECFE parent groups were evident in the oft-quoted adage among participants and staff: "We join for our kids and stay for ourselves." Parents report that initially they believed the program provided advantages for children's learning, but after beginning, they received unanticipated and ongoing support and sustenance from staff and other parents. Parent Time in the Kenan program is designed as a "time and a safe place for parents to deal with hard issues."

Topics range from educational concerns to nutrition, child and spouse abuse, chemical addictions, child development, and discipline, as well as lighter topics, such as personal style and grooming.

## ADDRESSING PARENTS' NEEDS DIRECTLY: FIGHTING ISOLATION AND POWERLESSNESS

Some programs directly address the isolation and powerlessness that characterize the lives of many disadvantaged families. In the Copeland Housing Project drop-in center in Duluth, Minnesota, three-quarters of the residents are single mothers with several children, who often do not leave their own apartments. Most do not have a car and must cross a major highway to reach the public bus service. The only playground within walking distance had been the one maintained by the Public Housing Authority in the project. Without notice, the Housing Authority took down all playground equipment and bulldozed the area. They later said it had been done because there was too much vandalism and broken glass.

Through discussions with individual parents and with the center's board (consisting of all parents at the drop-in center), the center decided to focus directly on parent isolation. The parent-run board decided that they wanted to get the playground back. After numerous meetings among themselves and with representatives from the housing authority, the parents promised that they would monitor the playground and keep it clean and free of broken bottles. They are now working on raising funds to replace the playground equipment.

### Multiple Types of Participation

These programs provide opportunities for parents to participate at different levels of intensity and in settings that call for varying degrees of interpersonal and group process skills. Similarly, programs respond to variations in the literacy and language ability of parents.

All programs in the in-depth study provide multiple levels of participation, viewing any contact with parents as positive. Some programs have weekly home visits, monthly parent meetings, and annual special events. Others expect weekly participation at a school or center, but offer one-day programs and four- and ten-week sessions as well. The Kenan program provides the most intense experience for parents (three days a week), but provides a flexible re-entry program. The district-wide program in McAllen, Texas, offers the widest range of participation among the programs visited.

Programs recognize that different ways of participating require different skills of parents and offer different opportunities. Home visits are effective for working with parents who have low self-esteem and few group process skills. At the same time, they do not provide parents with the opportunity, as group meetings do, to connect with other parents and to develop self-confidence through discussing their own thoughts and experiences with peers. Programs also recognize that home visits do not require parents to enter the school and learn to feel comfortable there. Therefore, most of these programs combine methods in order to elicit the participation of parents entering the program with differing motivations and skills. By employing a variety of methods, programs also are able to offer parents new ways to participate, as they acquire additional skills and self-confidence.

These programs also provide services that ease families' transitions across types of participation, that is, from individual to small group services, and from home into school settings. In HIPPY/Miami, for example, home visits alternate each week with a group parent meeting in the school led by the Parent Partner who conducts the home visits. Parents are much more likely to enter the school building to see the Parent Partner than to go alone to a school event. However, the hope is that once they become more familiar with the school, parents will take the initiative to become involved in other school events, such as attending parent-teacher conferences. AHEAD follows a similar model, with monthly parent cluster meetings in schools and biweekly home visits. Both programs emphasize the importance of developing self-esteem and self-confidence in parents, as well as group social skills. One ECFE drop-in "store front" center also works to assimilate families into neighborhood, small-group programs and parent workshops operated by other personnel. Interested families are escorted to initial meetings by the parent educators until they feel comfortable enough to attend on their own.

For the most involved parents, programs offer additional opportunities to participate. Center-based programs, such as ECFE, have a parent advisory board that is involved in deciding program content, planning for holidays, determining fees for sibling child care, and fundraising. In other programs, parents volunteer to visit new families in order to recruit them into the program.

Programs pay close attention to volunteer activists. Successful parents are the primary resource pool from which parent educators in AHEAD and HIPPY/Miami are recruited. FSI's workshops also are led by parents, and ECFE hires successful parents as classroom and community aides.

Programs also adapt to the varied literacy levels of families. Because of the generally low literacy levels among its population of parents, Project AHEAD prepares materials with graphics and cartoons, large print, and simple sentence construction. Program staff creatively translate such topics as how to conduct parent-teacher conferences and what are the grade-level learning objectives into visual and print material in English and Spanish.

Similarly, the FSI program helps parents understand its written materials. All written materials are read aloud in group sessions. Also, FSI group leaders are encouraged to be sensitive to parents' skills. For example, when it became clear to one FSI group leader that a parent in her group had low literacy skills and could not fill out the initial parent questionnaire, the FSI group leader sat next to the parent and unobtrusively helped her fill out the form. This parent ended up attending all three sessions and graduating from the program.

Programs recognize levels of language fluency as well. For example, in one HIPPY/Miami home visit with a mother who had recently learned to read in English, the bilingual parent educator stopped to explain English words that she herself had found difficult when she first learned English.

## Flexibility in Program Operations

Programs that work with the most disadvantaged and disorganized families remain flexible in their program activities in order to keep these families in the program. Flexibility in the schedule and location of program activities appears to be crucial. As one program director explained, her staff work with families in which no one has been employed for four generations, and the concept of scheduling an appointment for a home visit at a particular time on a particular day is not meaningful to the parent. Therefore, the program schedules visits more flexibly and provides frequent reminders, and the staff understand that the parent may not be ready or waiting when they arrive.

Flexible entry and re-entry options also are provided to respond to the competing demands faced by disadvantaged families. There are no strict attendance policies for group program activities offered on a continual basis (such as monthly parent cluster meetings in AHEAD and Evening Study Centers in McAllen), and parents may begin attending the meetings at any time. If there are waiting lists for some sequenced programs, as is true for some short-term programs in ECFE sites, program staff inform parents of the waiting lists as they encourage them to attend. If parents do not attend the first few sessions, others will be invited to attend. Even in the three-meeting FSI program, there are make-up lessons available so that parents can miss one session and still complete the program.

Although programs give wide latitude in attendance, a number of programs such as AHEAD, Home Base, Prestame Una Comadre, HIPPY/Miami and Kenan do set attendance policies. If families repeatedly do not keep appointments for home visits, do not answer the door and do not return telephone calls, and there are no extenuating circumstances, the families will be separated from the program to allow other families to participate. For example, in Prestame Una Comadre, a home visit program for Mexican-American migrant farm workers, if a family misses five home visits, the family life trainer may suggest that the family takes a break from the program and rejoin later. Similarly, if parents in the Kenan program do not maintain at least 50% attendance, staff will contact the families to see if there is a problem. Staff encourage families to return and always welcome families back, but because the program can accommodate so few families, staff need to keep close track of whether and when families will return. For all programs visited, it is with great reluctance that families are dropped from the program.

Where to locate parent activities is also a concern in family education. In the McAllen program, for example, some activities are held at the migrant housing project to facilitate participation. A number of programs want to have group parent meetings at the schools, in order to help parents grow comfortable in the school environment. At the same time, because program staff are aware of parent anxiety about the schools, they work with families to help them come to the schools. For example, in the McAllen program, STEP/PECES meetings are sometimes held in people's homes to accommodate those parents who cannot or do not want to come to the school because they are uncomfortable in the schools and/or because they do not speak English. During one home visit, when staff asked a young mother why she had not been coming to the parent meetings at the school, she replied that her husband wanted her to be home taking care of their young children. To enable this mother to take part in the sessions, staff said they would hold meetings at her neighbor's house and she could bring the children along.

### Techniques to Create Bonds among Parents and with the Program

Programs use numerous techniques to create bonds among parents and with the program, such as:

- formalized commitment represented by a contract or certificate of participation;

- tangible rewards for participation;
- ceremonies, rituals, and parties;
- food;
- parent support groups; and
- tangible program products.

Each of these is described below.

**Certificate of Participation.** Many programs require a formal commitment from families. Often the programs reinforce this commitment with a certificate of participation or contract that outlines parents' responsibilities. Typically, they are signed by the program director, the parent, the child (in programs for older children), and sometimes by school staff. In some cases, the certificates are printed on parchment paper with elaborate scrolling incorporating the program's name and logo, and are suitable for framing.

The Academia del Pueblo program, for example, has parents of participating children sign a contract that stipulates that the parent will:

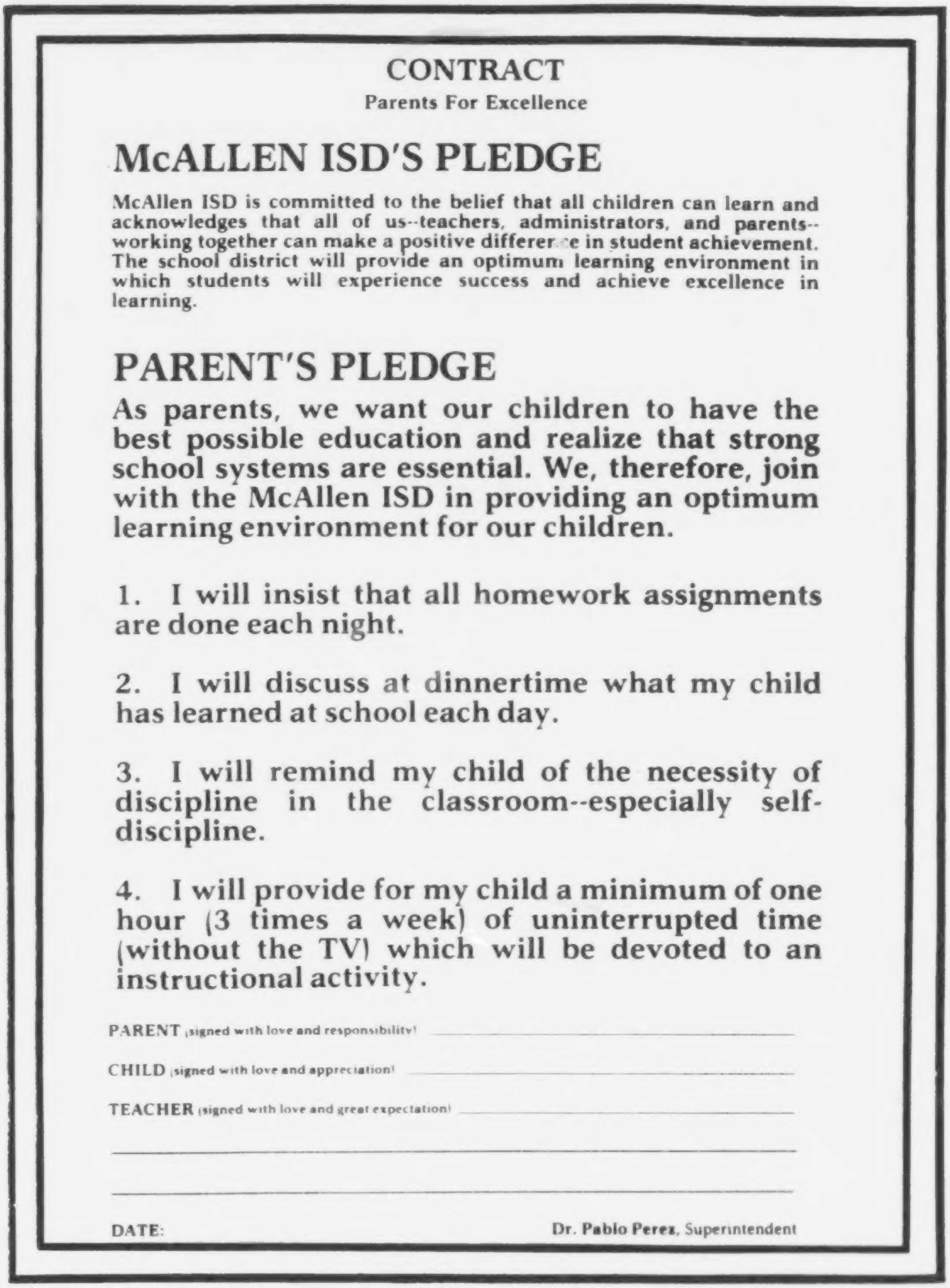
- attend at least half of the parent education meetings;
- read with the child at home for a specific amount of time;
- establish and support home rules for homework and school attendance;
- review and sign homework; and
- ensure that the child has a library card.

This contract is discussed with parents in an initial home visit prior to enrolling.

Parent contracts in most programs focus primarily on expectations for the parents and do not address the school's role. However, the McAllen Parental Involvement Program has developed a parent contract that emphasizes the responsibility of parents and the schools. English and Spanish versions of these parent contracts are displayed in Exhibit 4.1.

**Rewards for Participation.** In many programs, parents and children receive rewards for participating in certain events. At an elementary school for handicapped children in McAllen, Texas, the parent involvement group has organized a "Missing Link Club" to strengthen the link between home and school. Each parent receives a bright

## Exhibit 4.1
## McAllen Contract Parents for Excellence
(English Version)



### CONTRACT
Parents For Excellence

## McALLEN ISD'S PLEDGE

McAllen ISD is committed to the belief that all children can learn and acknowledges that all of us--teachers, administrators, and parents--working together can make a positive difference in student achievement. The school district will provide an optimum learning environment in which students will experience success and achieve excellence in learning.

## PARENT'S PLEDGE

**As parents, we want our children to have the best possible education and realize that strong school systems are essential. We, therefore, join with the McAllen ISD in providing an optimum learning environment for our children.**

1. I will insist that all homework assignments are done each night.

2. I will discuss at dinnertime what my child has learned at school each day.

3. I will remind my child of the necessity of discipline in the classroom--especially self-discipline.

4. I will provide for my child a minimum of one hour (3 times a week) of uninterrupted time (without the TV) which will be devoted to an instructional activity.

PARENT (signed with love and responsibility) ______________________

CHILD (signed with love and appreciation) ______________________

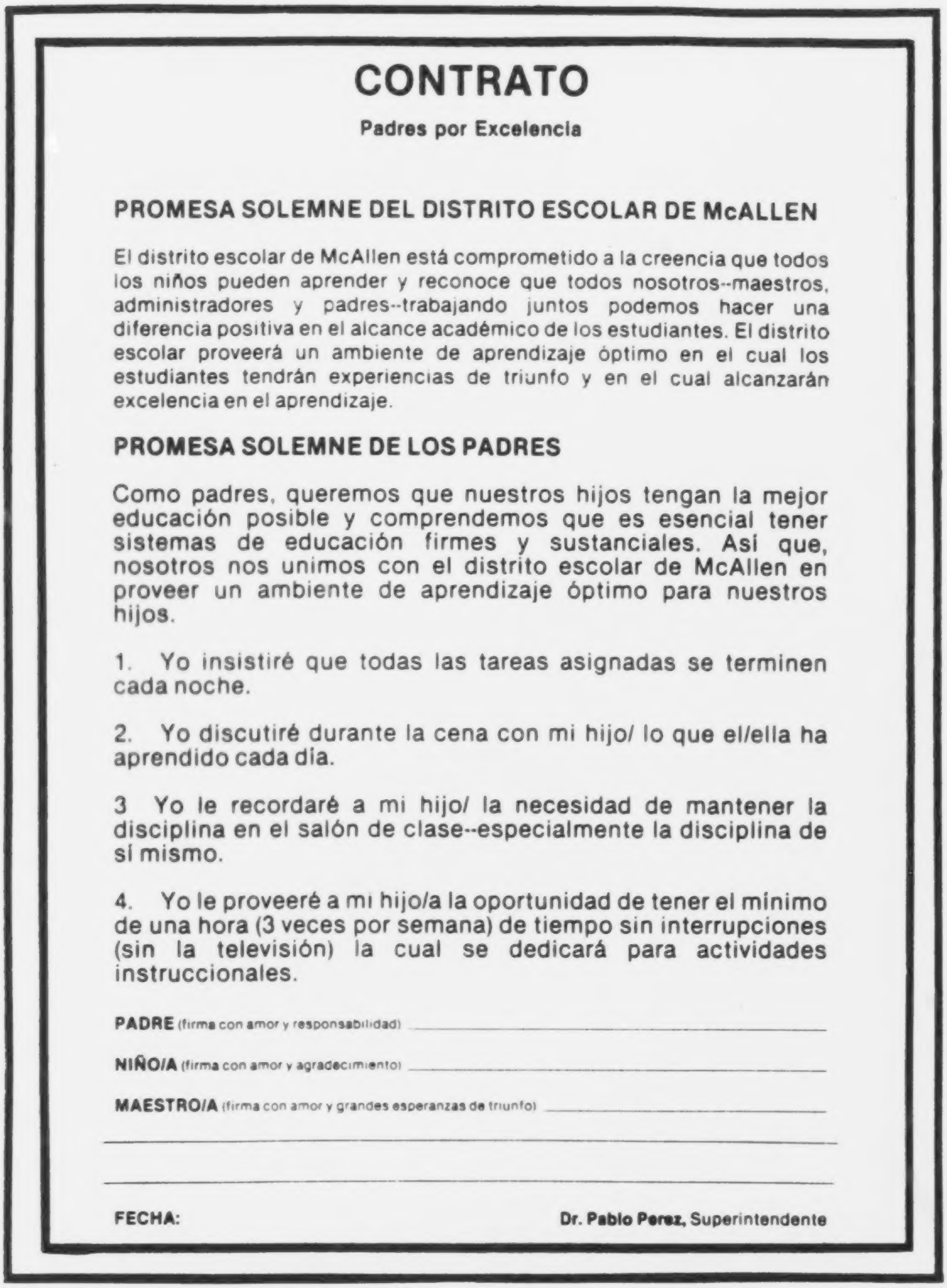
TEACHER (signed with love and great expectation) ______________________

______________________

______________________

DATE: Dr. Pablo Perez, Superintendent

## **Exhibit 4.1** (continued)
## McAllen Contract Parents for Excellence
(Spanish Version)



# CONTRATO

**Padres por Excelencia**

### PROMESA SOLEMNE DEL DISTRITO ESCOLAR DE McALLEN

El distrito escolar de McAllen está comprometido a la creencia que todos los niños pueden aprender y reconoce que todos nosotros--maestros, administradores y padres--trabajando juntos podemos hacer una diferencia positiva en el alcance académico de los estudiantes. El distrito escolar proveerá un ambiente de aprendizaje óptimo en el cual los estudiantes tendrán experiencias de triunfo y en el cual alcanzarán excelencia en el aprendizaje.

### PROMESA SOLEMNE DE LOS PADRES

Como padres, queremos que nuestros hijos tengan la mejor educación posible y comprendemos que es esencial tener sistemas de educación firmes y sustanciales. Así que, nosotros nos unimos con el distrito escolar de McAllen en proveer un ambiente de aprendizaje óptimo para nuestros hijos.

1. Yo insistiré que todas las tareas asignadas se terminen cada noche.

2. Yo discutiré durante la cena con mi hijo/ lo que el/ella ha aprendido cada día.

3 Yo le recordaré a mi hijo/ la necesidad de mantener la disciplina en el salón de clase--especialmente la disciplina de sí mismo.

4. Yo le proveeré a mi hijo/a la oportunidad de tener el mínimo de una hora (3 veces por semana) de tiempo sin interrupciones (sin la televisión) la cual se dedicará para actividades instruccionales.

**PADRE** (firma con amor y responsabilidad) ______________________

**NIÑO/A** (firma con amor y agradecimiento) ______________________

**MAESTRO/A** (firma con amor y grandes esperanzas de triunfo) ______________________

**FECHA:** **Dr. Pablo Perez,** Superintendente

orange button with the words "Missing Link Club" and one link (an orange paper clip) at the first parent meeting attended. For participation in such activities as attending a parent or PTA meeting, bringing a new parent to a meeting, volunteering in the school, or attending a teacher/parent conference, additional links are attached to make a long chain. Parents are encouraged to wear these buttons each time they come to the school.

Other programs also provide rewards for participation. At the Family Study Institute courses, parents are given a button to wear during the session, which they return at the end of the evening. After completing the third session, they keep the buttons. Participants also receive pencils, bookmarks, and mugs at different sessions of the two courses. In the Kenan program, families are given $50 at the end of the year for children's educational materials. HIPPY/Miami also gives families toys and books on special occasions--because fathers are typically underrepresented in the program (as in most family education programs), when two fathers were the first people to show up at a workshop, staff rewarded them both with toys for their children.

**Ceremonies, Rituals and Parties.** In center-based programs, daily opening and closing rituals serve to create bonds among participants. In ECFE programs, for example, parents and children sit together in a circle for songs at the beginning and end of the nearly two-hour session. The opening song is the "Name" song, a chant that takes each child's name in turn, with the lyrics "Who's here today? John's here today! Yay, John!" While designed to help children learn names, the song also helps families get to know each other.

The ceremonial use of color also helps to create bonds between staff and participants. HIPPY/Miami, for example, focuses on the colors blue and gold, and encourages parents and staff to wear the program's colors at special events.

Special recreational or educational activities offered throughout the year serve to strengthen families' ties to the program. Twice a year HIPPY/Miami sponsors a Jamboree at different community locations. Project Home Base sponsors an end-of-year picnic for parents and children that presents a variety of learning stations set up like carnival booths. HIPPY/Miami and FSI have graduation ceremonies. FSI parents who have completed the three-week program also receive a certificate signed by the school principal. The McAllen program presents a certificate of participation for attending at least four STEP/PECES sessions as well as rewards based on the number of hours of attendance.

**Food.** Preparing and sharing food also creates bonds among families. All group meetings provide hot and cold drinks and baked goods, so that parents and staff may talk informally before or after more structured events. Serving coffee also is considered to be a sign of respect for families.

In some programs, food is used to help connect culturally diverse groups. In one ECFE center, parents are asked from time to time to bring a snack representing something traditional in their culture. Parents are praised for preparing the food, and the similarities and differences among snacks from other cultures serve as a topic for conversation. At FSI, the graduation ceremony for parents is a feast and multicultural event.

In one ECFE program, parents had organized a potluck parents-only Thanksgiving dinner. The dinner took place during the parent meeting, while the children were with the early childhood educators. The parents organized the dinner because they wanted time to celebrate and talk among themselves, without children present.

**Parent Support Groups.** In center-based programs that include small, ongoing parent meetings, the sessions often become a support group for parents. This is particularly important for parents who experience substantial isolation because they are poor, young, single, or speak another language. To enhance the support function, parent groups have unwritten rules, such as whatever is said in the meeting is held in confidence and not repeated elsewhere, and no one puts anyone down. This support, as well as peer pressure to continue to attend, helps to sustain parents' involvement.

In both the Early Childhood Family Education program and Kenan, parent groups serve as supports for their members. In these groups, parents can relax, find companionship, and build their self-esteem. For example, when we spoke with a group of Kenan participants, one women pointed out how shy another woman had been when she began the program, at which point the other woman chimed in: "Now I chatter all the time...you can't shut me up." There obviously was a close rapport between the two women and a feeling of comraderie.

Parents also help each other in other ways, such as bringing in clothes that their children have outgrown to share with other families. In one ECFE program visited, the parent educator reported that when she handed out slips of paper to the group, asking them to write the names of anyone they knew who might benefit from a Thanksgiving food basket, each member wrote the names of the others in the group.

**Tangible Program Products.** To reinforce the program's identity and provide incentives for membership, many programs use the program name, logo, and motto (if applicable) on such items as stickers, balloons, pins, refrigerator magnets, buttons, ribbons, pencils, key chains, and book marks. Some projects also have coffee mugs and t-shirts with the project name and logo. In one project visited, staff each had purchased sweatshirts that they wore to the annual Christmas party. While some materials are used for general program publicity, they also reinforce the idea that parents and children belong to a tangible, identifiable program.

Program materials that serve utilitarian purposes also come with a highly visible program name and logo. In Project AHEAD's initial home visit, for example, the family is presented with a storage box for the child's school materials that is boldly imprinted with the AHEAD logo. The box is quite useful because children seldom have a room of their own and, thus, no private space for their school materials. At a subsequent visit, Project AHEAD staff provide each child with a three-sided cardboard structure to be unfolded and set up on a table where the child is working. The "carrel", as it is called, creates a three-sided study area and a work organizer that blocks out distractions.

Printed material handed out during home visits also creates a visible connection between the parent educator and the parent. In Project Home Base, for example, parents receive a double-sided activity sheet printed on the program's letterhead, printed with the program's logo, as well as a "Magic Message."

### Activities Focused on Concrete and Realistic Objectives

Positive results often are needed before parents will make lasting commitments to a program. Family education programs are careful to set concrete and realistic goals for families, so that they can experience immediate and continuing successes. Immediate results are especially important for families who are distrustful of school personnel and who have had a long history of negative and racist school experiences.

Initial activities by Project AHEAD staff, for example, concentrate on scheduling, with families setting up a calendar to decrease television time and shift bedtime hours so that young children go to bed by 8 or 9 o'clock rather than midnight or later. They also focus on activities that are not disruptive of routine, such as having children read aloud while dinner is being prepared. Staff report that parents become more enthusiastic about AHEAD when they see that such changes can result in better performance on tests and classroom work. Furthermore, as shown in the following vignette, concrete changes in parents' and children's behavior, however small, are signs of success for AHEAD.

## BUILDING ON EACH SUCCESS
### Project AHEAD

In programs focused on the most disadvantaged families, program success may best be measured by small signs, such as dressing more appropriately and creating an environment where children can learn. Examples of achievement include the following:

- Before participating in AHEAD home visits, one parent had been sending her daughter to school only two or three days a week, even though the family lives within sight of the school. Now she is sending her to school almost every day.
- One family educator reported that in the six months she had been working with one family she had helped the mother to organize and clean her house and to get out of an abusive relationship. She is now working with the mother on alternative forms of discipline, so that the mother and grandmother will stop hitting the child.
- According to school and AHEAD staff, AHEAD parents are dressing more appropriately for school meetings, wearing street clothes and make-up rather than curlers and nightgowns. They also report that AHEAD children are bathed and dressed more appropriately than they were before.

### Activities for Children that Build Their Enthusiasm

In programs that include activities for the parent and child, children's enthusiasm for their own activities helps to sustain their parents' participation. At the Family Study Institute in Chicago, children are proud of having their parents attend and be at the school for the three-session training. At HIPPY/Miami, parents and Parent Partners reported that children remind parents when it is time to do the HIPPY work. In one school, a child proudly introduced himself to visitors in the school cafeteria by singing the HIPPY "Golden Star" song ("I am a HIPPY golden star, with your help I can go far...").

At Kenan, getting the children "hooked" on the program helps to keep the parents coming three days a week. One parent said that her child wants to go to school every day, and even asks her on Saturdays if it is a school day. Another parent reported that when she does not want to get up and get ready for school on a particular day, her child wants to go to school. The mother realizes it is easier to get up, get dressed and go to school than to listen to her child ask about school all day. Thus, the preschool component creates an added incentive for parents to come to the program. In PREP, children put a star by their name for each week they attend. Because children do not want to miss a "star" opportunity, they urge their parents to attend the following week.

## PROGRAM SERVICES

### Broad Service Orientation

Disadvantaged families often face multiple stresses, so that programs must either be full-service programs or have an extensive array of referral resources and linkages with other public and private agencies. Although no program views itself as a coordinating agency for all social services, staff must know where needed services may be obtained and often act as facilitator or negotiator. Program staff not only identify other service providers but usually accompany family members on initial visits.

In all programs visited, staff see themselves as problem solvers for disadvantaged families, working with families to solve whatever difficulties arise that may prevent the family from continuing in the program. These family education programs generally refer the most dysfunctional families (e.g., with serious substance abuse in the home) to other professionals if issues are beyond the expertise of program staff, even though staff in these programs expressed their reluctance at letting any family go. Once a family is part of their program, program staff feel concerned about and responsible for that family. Programs such as AHEAD and Prestame Una Comadre, which work with multiple-stress families, often devote substantial time to educating parents about child abuse and providing information about alternative forms of discipline to enhance the safety of the child.

A number of programs, such as Project AHEAD, HIPPY/Miami, and McAllen, also conduct home visits in a troubleshooting role for schools and families. Parent educators may visit families because children have incomplete medical exams, multiple absences, or display behavior problems in class. In some cases, as with Project AHEAD in Los Angeles, parent educators are the only people whom the most disadvantaged families will allow in their homes.

**Transportation and Child Care.** The majority of programs either provide transportation, are within walking distance of parents' homes, or have home-based activities. Most programs provide child care for special events, and a few provide child care for ongoing activities. For example, during biweekly parent meetings in HIPPY/Miami, Parent Partners who are not leading the group will look after the children. FSI provides baby sitters for its three-session program, and older children may attend the night meetings along with their parents. Parents often bring their preschool children to AHEAD's monthly parent cluster meetings and to McAllen's parent group meetings. Nevertheless, child care remains an issue in many programs.

**Meals.** In the full-day Kenan program, breakfast and lunch are available for parents and their children. Similarly, an ECFE program for working single mothers changed its schedule to offer the program in the early evening, with dinner and child care provided, after prior events that met later in the evening and without dinner had been poorly attended. Many programs link with philanthropic organizations to provide food baskets for Thanksgiving and other holidays.

**Health Care.** Most family education programs provide health care referrals, and health care information is often incorporated into program activities. In one ECFE parent meeting, the parent educator made a presentation to Hmong parents, at their request, about what was involved in taking children to a doctor for check-ups. She also showed them pictures of a doctor's office and the equipment the doctor may use. ECFE staff reported that community health workers usually come once a month to present information on immunization, toilet training, nutrition, and food preparation. The McAllen Parental Involvement Program offers a presentation by the school nurse on identifying and treating common childhood illnesses.

Family education programs become actively involved with medical issues if they affect a child's school attendance. HIPPY/Miami staff, for example, take families to the health clinic so that children will get the immunizations necessary for school entry, and Project Home Base arranges hearing tests and eye exams. If children are not taken to medical services because of Medicaid coverage concerns, program staff try to clarify coverage.

**Clothing.** HIPPY/Miami staff will seek to identify places that donate clothing for children needing clothes to wear to school. The McAllen School District sets aside $1,000 annually for parent involvement coordinators to help families with urgent clothing needs. Several ECFE centers have clothing exchanges.

**Employment and Additional Education.** Almost all programs provide referrals for employment training. In addition, many staff use their personal connections to help parents with employment issues. The HIPPY/Miami coordinator, for example, gets a list of all jobs available in the Dade County School District and keeps an eye out for jobs that might be appropriate for family members. She encourages adults to seek these jobs and even helps them complete application forms.

All family education programs encourage parents to pursue additional education for themselves and view such education as a measure of program success. As examples, Project AHEAD encourages parents to attend weekend literacy classes; McAllen incorporates adult education into its program, especially in English as a Second Language; and Kenan actively pursues postsecondary education opportunities for its GED recipients.

### Continuous Reinforcements

Programs use a variety of positive reinforcements to maintain the involvement of families. Once families make the initial commitment, family education staff:

- display high expectations that families will continue to participate;
- present the program as a set of sequenced activities;
- build in periodic reminders, such as notes, telephone calls, and home visits;
- reward and acknowledge parents in personal ways for their participation; and
- focus on positive alternatives for parenting and personal behavior.

Each of these reinforcements is described below.

**High Expectations.** Once families begin participation, program staff display high expectations about continued involvement. Staff communicate to families that they expect them to attend regularly, and are prepared to help solve any barriers to participation. The focus shifts subtly from encouraging people to join to enthusiasm about their now being part of the group.

**Sequenced Activities.** In all programs visited, core program components are presented as a sequence of activities. For example, home visits begin with a review of what happened since the last visit, proceed with the day's lesson, and end looking to the week ahead. Project Home Base helps establish continuity through loaned materials--each week a library book is left and the book from the week before is picked up.

HIPPY/Miami provides numbered lesson plans which parents will complete with their child in the coming week.

Center- and school-based programs incorporate similar principles. At the second FSI workshop, for example, parents are asked about the activities they accomplished during the week, such as helping children find a time and place to study, whether the children followed their study schedules, and praising the children for good study habits. At the third session, parents are asked about additional activities, including the amount of time they were active listeners for their children.

By stressing connections between current and future activities, programs hope to encourage continued participation. Activities that build on one another also may be less threatening to parents because they include familiar material or concepts.

**Periodic Reminders.** In programs with home visits, such as Project Home Base and AHEAD, parents are called the day before the home visit as a reminder. If the parent has no telephone, the message is left with a designated telephone contact. Furthermore, in each Project AHEAD weekly visit, the parent signs a visit card and writes down the telephone number. Staff find that updated telephone numbers are always needed because the number either changes or is disconnected frequently. In center- and school-based programs, such as ECFE and the McAllen Parental Involvement Program, home visits are conducted when parents have not attended in a while in order to see if there is a problem and urge them to attend program activities.

Programs also give parents a calendar indicating holidays and special program events. Families are encouraged to post calendars conspicuously in their homes (on the refrigerator, for example), and participate in special as well as continuing events. Some programs, such as Project AHEAD, set up an individual long-range plan for each family which is kept in a book the parent educator brings to each home visit.

**Personal Recognition.** Program staff stress the importance of acknowledging individual parents and their contributions. The personal touches may seem small, yet are essential. Staff of one ECFE drop-in center reported that they make sure to greet each parent by name at arrival and say goodbye to each by name when they leave; additionally, they converse with parents on an individual basis about their child. For parents with low self-esteem, being individually recognized is important. Project Home Base reinforces parents by telling them that they are the first and most important teacher that their child will ever have. In FSI training sessions, the group leader and other parents applaud each time a parent contributes. Applause is a very important part of the FSI curriculum--it is intended to recognize the contribution that each parent can make and to emphasize the value of their knowledge and experience.

**Positive Reinforcement.** Program staff focus on positive alternatives and nonjudgmental suggestions for parenting and personal behavior. Parents are not reminded of past failures. Kenan staff talked about concentrating on "starting from right now," with everyone having a chance to redress past mistakes. In other programs, staff commented that parents are not singled out and criticized for doing something wrong (such as picking a child up by the arm, or yelling at or hitting a child). Rather, staff model preferred behaviors, talk about alternative forms of discipline, and ask parents in a discussion group about different ways to discipline children. When suggestions are offered in a nonjudgmental way or come from the personal experience of peers, they are more likely to be accepted by parents.

## PARENT/STAFF INTERACTIONS

### Sensitivity to Relationship between Survival and Educational Issues

Critical to continued participation by the most needy families is a balance between educational matters and survival issues (such as a safe home environment, food, health care, and adequate finances). When survival issues arise, parent educators are prepared to address them or secure help from other agencies. At the same time, staff cannot allow survival issues to swamp the core educational message.

### Personal Respect and Caring

Staff concern and support for families is a hallmark of all programs visited. In each program, staff qualifications explicitly include being caring, emphatic, sensitive to families' needs, aware and appreciative of cultural diversity, nonjudgmental, and able to distinguish between their own and families' values.

Conveying respect and caring to the families is key to continued family participation, and is communicated in various ways. At the most basic level, it means knowing the facts about a family. As parent educators described in Project AHEAD: "When we go into family's home, we need to know about their kids -- their names, ages, teachers' names. When we show the parent that we know about their kids, they will be more likely to let us in [the door]."

A Project AHEAD parent had this to say about her parent educator, Kathy:

> Kathy has been great. She is really concerned about how I educate my child. We talk about how to get different projects going at home, making flash cards, playing games around what objects are. She also shows me that there are different rewards than just giving candy. She always has something nice to say. She has also helped me with problem solving. When the kids get into a fight, rather than whip them both, I will sit down with them and talk about what happened.

Although all project staff appear to be aware of the need to encourage and support parents, parent educators who come from the same community appear to be able to more easily communicate respect and understanding for poor families. In HIPPY/Miami and Project AHEAD, parents and parent educators both mentioned how important it is to have parents from the community working with other parents, because these parents understand their concerns and do not seem judgmental.

The key role of staff and descriptions of staff qualifications are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 5

# STAFFING FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## OVERVIEW

Staff issues are key in these family education programs. Regardless of the program's approach, the staff who work with the families are considered critical to the program's successful operation by both program administrators and parent participants. Personal characteristics of staff predominant when program administrators are asked about important elements in program success; genuine warmth and caring about families are high on the list.

In addition, program directors identify staff commitment to the program goals and philosophy as critical to a high-quality program. Missionary zeal--commitment and enthusiasm--are top priorities for effective staff. Much of the work done by staff in these family education programs is difficult, especially when staff are working with families with multiple problems, and these family education programs depend on having staff who are more than just employees.

**Staffing Arrangements.** The programs employ a variety of staffing arrangements, in terms of the types of teaching staff, use of school district personnel, and qualifications required of program staff. Although a number of different staffing arrangements appear to work, there are trade-offs in terms of relationships with participants, staff development needs, and relationships with other organizations.

One of the most important staffing decisions is the extent to which programs employ professionals or paraprofessionals. The majority of programs in this study use paraprofessional staff in some capacity. In most programs, paraprofessionals work as aides or assistants to a professional teacher. Four programs use paraprofessionals as the parent teachers; no program uses paraprofessionals as early childhood teachers.

**Paraprofessionals as Staff.** Programs using paraprofessional teachers identify a number of advantages, including that the paraprofessionals are more likely to be:

- ethnically and culturally diverse and similar in background to the program families;
- familiar with the community culture and resources;
- effective at recruiting and working with the hardest-to-reach families;
- credible to the families; and
- positive role models for program families.

At the same time, using paraprofessionals as primary teaching staff poses some challenges to programs, including:

- lack of credibility with other professional groups, particularly school staff;
- the need for additional training for staff with little professional experience or training; and
- higher turnover among paraprofessionals than professionals.

**Training.** Regardless of whether a program employs primarily paraprofessional or professional staff, all programs recognize the need for staff development. Formal inservice training sessions, focusing on topics such as child development and community resources, are either provided by programs or collaborating agencies on a periodic basis. More informal staff meetings are arranged on a regular basis in all programs, and staff identify these sessions as an important vehicle for staff development. These meetings allow staff to collaborate on solving problems they are facing in working with families, and also provide an opportunity for staff support and team-building.

These staffing issues are discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter.

## STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Staffing arrangements in these programs vary on a number of dimensions, including the types of staff needed to implement the program, the extent to which school district personnel are used as program staff, and whether staff are professionals or paraprofessionals.

### Types of Staff

Staffing patterns are relatively simple. Outside of a program director, the programs have staff who are responsible for working with parents alone or parents and children together. These staff have a variety of titles: parent teacher, parent educator, family life trainer, or family visitor. As Exhibit 5.1 shows, eleven of the seventeen programs have only this single staff position of parent educator. Five programs have additional teaching staff who work with children apart from their parents. The programs with separate parent and child teachers are, in all but one case, center-based, early childhood programs.

**Aides.** Six programs employ aides or assistants to certified teaching staff, either child teachers or parent educators. The individuals hired as aides live in the same community or have backgrounds similar to those of the parents in the program.

## Exhibit 5.1
## Types of Teaching Staff and Staff Qualifications in Family Education Programs*

| | Core Teaching Staff | | | Other Teaching Staff |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Types of staff | Number per Site | Qualifications | |
| **ECFE** | parent educators<br>child teachers | 1<br>2 | B.A. plus state license<br>B.A. plus state license | community aides in child class |
| **HIPPY/Miami** | parent partners (home visitors) | 5 | paraprofessionals from community, often parents from HIPPY | |
| **Project Home Base** | home visitors | 18 | A.A. or B.A. | |
| **Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project** | adult education teachers<br>child teachers | 1<br>1 | certified teacher<br>B.A.; teacher certification preferred | paraprofessional<br>teacher assistant in child classroom |
| **Project AHEAD** | family educators (home visitors) | 10 | paraprofessionals from community often parents from AHEAD | |
| **Family Study Institute** | parent group leaders | up to 10 | parents from school | |
| **McAllen Parental Involvement Project** | parent involvement coordinators<br>teachers in Study Centers | 5<br>varies | professionals, from community<br>certified teachers from district | parent community aides |
| **Project FIEL** | instructors<br>community liaison | 1 | licensed elementary teachers<br>professional | |
| **PREP** | parent teacher<br>child teacher | 1<br>1 | licensed high school teacher<br>B.A. plus ECE certification | high school student aides |
| **Prestame Una Comadre** | family life trainers (home visitors) | 1- 3 | B.A., preferably Hispanic | |
| **Syracuse Pre-K** | child teachers<br>parent involvement coordinator | 1<br>part-time | early childhood training experience<br>professional, trained social worker | teacher assistant in child classroom<br>parent aides trained by program |
| **Academia del Pueblo** | parent coordinator<br>parent teachers<br>child teachers | 1<br>2<br>2 | B.S., knowledge of community<br>certified teacher in bilingual education<br>certified teacher | Hispanic high school student tutors |
| **Family Math** | instructors | varies | professional teachers and parents from community | |
| **Kuban School** | parent teachers | 10 | professionals -- teachers from school | |
| **Parents in Touch** | parent teachers | varies | teachers from district lead workshops | |

Two curriculum-only programs not included in exhibit

**Use of School Staff.** Programs for families of elementary school students often use school staff to help operate the program. However, none of the early childhood programs use school staff as teachers.

As Exhibit 5.1 shows, four of the nine programs for elementary students use district teachers as core teaching staff in the parent education activities. The district-wide parent involvement programs--McAllen and Parents in Touch in Indianapolis--were developed by district staff and use district teachers to lead some of the family education activities. Some of this teacher time is paid, and some is volunteer. The Kuban program, which also was developed within the school, is implemented entirely by teachers in the school as part of their job responsibilities; that is, with no additional pay. The TIPS-Math program depends on substantial volunteer time from school teaching staff to adapt the home activities to the school's curriculum and to review the activities when completed. The Family Math Program is taught by either teachers or parents who have gone through training.

Two other elementary school programs use school staff to help in program implementation. The Family Study Institute courses depend entirely on school volunteers--teachers and parents--for implementation. Each school identifies one volunteer teacher to attend the training, help train the parent leaders, and supervise at the evening sessions. The ABT program in Maryland began in a single school district, using the Chapter 1 liaison and parent volunteers to run the program, and other school districts that adopt the program use this model.

**Use of Volunteers.** Few programs studied depend on volunteers as primary teaching staff, except FSI courses and Family Math. The Family Study Institute courses depend completely on unpaid volunteer parents to lead the parent group sessions. In the Family Math program, some of the sites implementing the course use volunteer parents and teachers as instructors (paid and unpaid). One of the reasons that these programs can rely on volunteers is that, in both, the amount of time required of volunteer instructors is short-term and of limited duration. Also, volunteer instructors are not expected to assume a broader support role for parents.

Using volunteer or school staff clearly has advantages. One obvious benefit is economic. Another advantage is that it confers "ownership" of the program to the school and community. For example, the Family Study Institute courses are implemented by volunteers in the schools; as a result, according to program administrators, the course is the school's program instead of being imposed on the school from the outside. On the other hand, at least one program for school-age children that does not use school staff or volunteers--Project AHEAD--believes that there are important advantages if the families see the program staff as separate from the schools.

## Staff Qualifications

One of the clearest distinctions among the programs in terms of staffing is whether the primary teaching staff are required to have professional qualifications or are paraprofessionals. Paraprofessional and community staff for many years have had a role in early childhood education and family education, especially as aides, when programs have been targeted on disadvantaged and minority populations not well-represented in the ranks of professional teachers.

The central distinction between professional and paraprofessional staff is that professional staff must be licensed or certified teachers, or have a college degree. Paraprofessional staff may be required to have a high school diploma or GED certificate, but typically are not required to have specialized experience or training.

Although the term "paraprofessional" refers to qualifications, it also implies that the individual comes from "the community." Although in reality both professionals and paraprofessionals may have lived in the communities being served by a program, it is more likely to be true of paraprofessional staff. Therefore, the terms paraprofessional and community staff are often used synonymously. In fact, arguments in favor of using paraprofessional staff typically focus on the community membership of the individual or the similarity in background with the participating families. Paraprofessionals are seen as bringing to a program their familiarity and sensitivity to the particular needs of the population being served.

McAllen and Prestame una Comadre employ professional staff who are native to the community. The links these staff have to the community provide the program with some of the advantages often attributed to using "paraprofessional" staff in other programs. McAllen also employs paraprofessional staff from the community to assist the professionals.

The programs differ markedly in whether and how they use paraprofessional staff. As Exhibit 5.1 shows, eight programs employ paraprofessional or community staff. Four of these programs use paraprofessionals as teachers and the rest utilize paraprofessionals as assistants or aides. In all eight programs, the paraprofessional staff are hired from the community in which the program operates.

**Paraprofessionals as teachers.** Paraprofessional teaching staff, where they exist, are always parent educators. In the programs studied, no paraprofessionals work as early childhood teachers (although paraprofessionals often work as classroom aides).

In two of the programs with paraprofessional teaching staff--HIPPY/Miami and Project AHEAD--paraprofessionals serve as home visitors. In each case, the paraprofessionals are paid staff who must have a high school diploma or GED and are members of the community being served, with preference given to graduates of the program. Program staff characterize these parents as enthusiastic and able to work with other people; additionally, the parents who are hired as program staff demonstrate a commitment to the program philosophy.

The other two programs using paraprofessionals as teachers--the FSI courses and some Family Math courses--recruit parent volunteers from the school community to implement the program. Both programs serve families with children in elementary school. The volunteers lead groups of parents through the program materials and are trained either by program staff or by other parent trainers. There are no stated job requirements for these volunteers, and parents represent a wide range of backgrounds and experience--some have college degrees and others do not yet have high school diplomas.

While many family education programs use paraprofessional staff, not all programs agree that this is the optimal strategy. As part of the Minnesota ECFE program, for example, two new state teacher certifications were instituted--for the positions of parent educator and child educator. The licensure requires additional courses above a bachelor's degree. No other program required specific licensure for parent teachers.

## USING PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFF

### Advantages of Paraprofessional Staff

Programs that use paraprofessionals and/or community members as teachers feel strongly about the importance of this strategy for the effectiveness of the program. Staff clearly believe in the power of the paraprofessional staffing model. The decision to hire paraprofessionals does not appear to be solely a financial decision, but instead reflects a philosophical decision about appropriate qualifications for teachers/educators working with low-income, minority, and hard-to-reach families.

Program staff and directors attribute a number of advantages to using paraprofessional staff. The benefits are linked to the community *membership* of the paraprofessionals and to their shared background with families, and include the following:

- reflect the cultural and ethnic makeup of the communities served by the programs;
- are familiar with and sensitive to the community characteristics, culture and resources;
- speak the same language as the parents;
- share common experiences and life circumstances with the families, which facilitates acceptance by and a trusting relationship with the families;
- are more effective at recruiting and retaining hard-to-reach families who are the most isolated and suspicious of outside agencies;
- have enhanced credibility with some groups of parents; and
- serve as a role model for parents in the program.

Each of these advantages is discussed below.

**Multicultural Staff.** These programs recognize the importance of a staff that reflects the language and ethnic groups in the communities being served. Programs honor that recognition by hiring community and paraprofessional staff. All programs have some staff who are of the same language and ethnic background as the families. About half of the programs that serve predominantly minority and limited-English-proficient (LEP) families have a staff that also is predominantly minority and bilingual. Three programs--HIPPY/Miami, Project AHEAD, and the Family Study Institute--achieve this goal by using teachers/paraprofessionals who also are parents from the community, including previous program participants.

**Familiarity with the Community.** Paraprofessional staff from the communities being served provide programs with a valuable source of information about the formal and informal resources available. They also help avoid the perception that the program has come into the community from the outside, with little understanding of the circumstances of the families being targeted by the program. For example, one urban program director commented that paraprofessionals hired from the community understand the extended family structure typical of participating families and are able to do their job despite the presence of relatives. Staff from the community also may have a special sensitivity to the concerns of the families, and the staff may be less likely to inadvertently offend or misunderstand families.

**Relationships Between Parents and Staff.** Programs suggest that staff from the community are able to more easily establish close, trusting relationships with disadvantaged parents. In a number of programs, it is crucial that staff are members of the community rather than from agencies outside of the community in order to make even initial contacts with families. Two programs that work on an individual basis with urban, minority, hard-to-reach parents in their homes use entirely paraprofessional staff. The families in these programs are likely to be suspicious of agency personnel. In fact, the paraprofessional home visitors in Project AHEAD are often able to gain access to the homes of families where school staff can not. Paraprofessionals are more likely to be accepted by these families, who distinguish these staff from other agency staff with whom parents may have had either negative or no contact.

### PARAPROFESSIONALS AS HOME VISITORS

Walking into a home where a HIPPY/Miami home visitor is working with a mother, it is initially difficult to ascertain which person is the program staff member and which is the parent. The home visitor and parent are the same race, wear similar clothes, and speak in a similar way. In fact, the home visitor is a former participant in the HIPPY/Miami program, who later was recruited as one of the home visitors.

During the session, the home visitor takes the role of the parent and reads through the learning activities, with the parent responding as the child might. Because of her dual experience as parent and teacher, the home visitor can model the approach the parent should take in presenting lessons to her child and also indicate what correct responses on the child's part would be. HIPPY calls their home visitors "Parent Partners", and the name reflects the mutuality of this relationship--of two parents sitting together in service of children.

One program director stressed the importance of parents perceiving staff as "totally supporting the family, not as an outside agency with its own agenda." Another director said that her goal is for there to be "no differential in power between the family educator and the family." In a third program, a parent educator from the community stated that "We welcome the parents with love and warmth, and with compassion for the problems they face." Using paraprofessional and community staff helps programs achieve these interpersonal goals, which are considered critical to the effectiveness of family education.

The common background and shared experiences of paraprofessional staff and the families they serve provide multiple connections that promote a bond between parents and teachers. Programs believe that this bond enhances the learning process. Most of the programs employ individuals from the community in some capacity, in order to establish this tie. In five programs that serve predominantly minority and/or LEP parents, all of the staff come from the same area as the families. These programs believe that their staff can viscerally understand the situations faced by the families in the program and are therefore more effective teachers. For example, a HIPPY/Miami Parent Partner, working with a mother who had recently learned to read in English, stopped to explain the words in the text that she herself had found difficult upon first learning English.

**Effectiveness with Hard-to-Reach Families.** Community staff are particularly important for recruiting and retaining hard-to-reach families, who are likely to be suspicious of personnel from community agencies. The director of a program that uses paraprofessionals as home visitors to isolated, urban black and Hispanic families considers the acceptance of the paraprofessionals as a "first step" in connecting isolated parents to the outside world. The contact and relationship with paraprofessional staff could "pave the way" for parents to gradually become able to interact and work with other agency staff, especially school staff.

In a number of programs in urban areas, staff who are not from the community often do not feel safe venturing into the community. This lack of comfort interferes with a program's ability to recruit and work effectively with parents. Using staff who are familiar with the community and known to the families is clearly vital to serving the hardest-to-reach population.

**Enhanced Credibility.** Having paraprofessionals as teachers strengthens the credibility of the message being communicated. That is, disadvantaged parents are more likely to believe that the program will affect their lives and their child's future if the message comes from individuals with whom they can identify. For example, the Family Study Institute courses are taught by parents to parents; participants who were interviewed are enthusiastic about having other parents as the leaders. As one parent put it, "In this program, we are all teachers."

The power of parent-to-parent teaching also is understood in programs that use professional teachers. In some of these programs, staff are well aware of the value of the teaching that goes on among parents in group discussions. Programs may try to maximize the opportunities for parents to be the communicators of the program message by offering each other advice and ideas for dealing with child-rearing. Even in the professionally staffed programs, parents teaching each other have a special credibility that may be equally or more powerful than the same information from a professional teacher.

The importance of differentiating program staff from professional teachers depends on the context in which the program operates. In some urban settings where programs work with populations for whom distrust of the schools is more entrenched, this distinction is critical, and using paraprofessional, community staff is the means by which programs distinguish themselves from the schools. Program staff indicate that being perceived as separate from the schools is less critical with Hispanic families than with African-American families.

## PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFF AS ROLE MODELS

Parent Partners in HIPPY/Miami recognize the impact the program has had on their own development; this growth provides visible evidence to parents in the program of the potential for personal change. The following is an excerpt from a speech before the Florida House of Representatives made by a Parent Partner discussing the impact of the program on her self-esteem, professional development, and relationship with her family. Before this mother of eight children participated in HIPPY, she had low self-esteem, doubted her abilities as a wife and mother, and had limited English skills that restricted her employment opportunities. She enrolled in the program to improve her skills and pursue a career in education.

> "I'm excited now that I have completed eleven months as a Parent Partner. By the way, it is a most rewarding experience because I am more than just a Parent Partner. We are the teachers, counselor, and a dear friend to the families we serve, and they depend on us as much as we depend on them."
>
> "I'm learning now how to type and operate a computer. Also, my husband is waiting to attend evening school at the Miami Lakes Technical School. My son who dropped out of junior high five years ago has returned to school. He is attending North Miami Senior High School in the evening."
>
> "This wonderful program has made a fantastic positive change in my life and most of all in my marriage... I have gained my husband's respect, and my children are not embarrassed of me any longer. Before this program was offered, I didn't feel good about myself (and) neither did my family."

**Role Model Provided by the Paraprofessional.** Paraprofessional staff, especially graduates of the program, offer parents role models for new directions their lives might take as a result of participating. In this sense, the paraprofessional staff represent living examples of the ways in which the program can enhance the quality of life for the families. As one program director put it, "Teachers who come from the community convey a positive message that if we could make it, you and your children can make it, too." In Project AHEAD, when the parent educators are presented as "parents of successful children," that is, children who are doing well in school, the staff members serve as role models for program parents who want to see their children succeed.

### Challenges in Using Paraprofessional Staff

The programs also are very aware that using paraprofessionals poses a number of challenges, which are discussed below.

**Lack of Credibility with Professional Groups.** Although paraprofessional and community staff may have increased credibility with the parents in the program, they may lack credibility with other professional groups, particularly in programs that attempt to develop collaborative relationships between program staff and school staff concerning the participating families. Professional educators tend to question paraprofessionals, both in terms of their possibly limited knowledge base and in terms of their potential for acting as advocates for the families rather than as more "objective" professionals. In the ECFE program in Minnesota, where special licensure requirements have been instituted statewide for parent and child educators, having program staff perceived as professionals by school district staff is regarded as an important element in the program's success. To tie the program into the community, ECFE augments its professional teaching staff with community aides and "natural helpers."

Some problems with lack of credibility may diminish over time, as school staff see evidence of the program's value and as they work with program staff and come to realize the value of their viewpoint. Project AHEAD staff report that there was initially some resistance among teachers to discuss children and families with the paraprofessional AHEAD staff. However, this resistance diminished as teachers realized that the AHEAD staff sometimes had better access to information on the home environments than they did, because of families' greater acceptance of the AHEAD staff.

When the Family Study Institute courses are described to schools, program staff are explicit that the roles and concerns of the parent-teachers in the program are quite different from those of teachers in the school. Both program and school staff commented that this clear distinction reduces tension between program and school staff, and alleviates the paraprofessionals' anxiety about competing with school staff.

**Increased Staff Turnover.** In general, the programs experienced higher turnover among paraprofessionals than among the professional staff. Program directors feel that, on the whole, the paraprofessional positions are considered to be good jobs. However, they recognize that the pay is low and that staff move on as higher paying jobs become available. In addition, the on-the-job experience paraprofessionals obtain in the program qualifies them for other jobs (i.e., full-time, better pay).

**Flexibility in Using the Curriculum.** Some program directors indicate that paraprofessional staff may be less flexible in presenting the program's curriculum to parents than the program directors prefer. Directors perceive some paraprofessional staff as less able to adapt curriculum materials, compared with professional teachers. However, they also recognize that paraprofessionals may be better attuned to family survival issues and able to address these as well as the educational goals of the program curriculum.

All of the programs with paraprofessional teachers use curricula that are highly structured. In fact, the program with the least-trained staff has the most prescriptive curriculum. Program directors feel that the structure is important for effective teaching of the curriculum. In essence, it provides a supporting framework for paraprofessional staff, who may have limited resources for developing their own curricula with the families. Program directors state that the structure in the curriculum enables them to implement their program with staff who have a wide range of training and experience. For example, in one program, a heterogeneous group of parent teachers uses a curriculum that has been developed to the point that any parent can teach it, as long as he or she can read the materials out loud.

**Staff Development Needs.** Although all of these programs provide ongoing staff development, regardless of whether the staff are professionals or paraprofessionals, the programs with paraprofessional teaching staff appear to be particularly concerned with providing ongoing staff support, and invest substantial time in inservice training. This shows up in the frequency with which staff are brought together. Staff meetings provide the opportunity for informal, peer training, as staff members describe problems with specific families or issues and other staff offer suggestions, recommendations, and relevant experiences. For example, in HIPPY/Miami the five Parent Partners meet with the program coordinator every Friday. In these sessions, the Parent Partners report on each family they visit, review the curriculum materials to be used during the next week, and discuss other issues related to their work. In addition, topics of interest for future meetings are discussed and planned.

The focus on staff support for paraprofessionals is motivated to some extent by a recognition that they may need additional support. It also is true that programs provide substantial staff meeting time in recognition of the fact that when paraprofessional staff visit parents individually in homes, as occurs in a number of projects, they experience the stress of working alone under difficult conditions.

## TRAINING FOR PROGRAM STAFF

Staff in most programs singled out inservice training as crucial in making the job manageable as well as in promoting staff retention. All programs conduct regular inservice training, either weekly or biweekly, as well as more intensive training at the beginning of each year. Inservice training seems to have two components. First, the training serves to provide factual information to staff on specific topics addressed either by knowledgeable staff or outside experts. The training also provides an opportunity for staff communication and team building. Although staff appreciate training that focuses on specific information topics, they regard the staff support function as more important. Staff value the interpersonal, team relationships most of all in helping them deal with and sometimes solve the difficult situations that arise in working with families. In addition, staff training time helps support and sustain staff commitment to the program philosophy and mission, which is critical to program effectiveness.

Training staff to work with culturally diverse families is one of the more difficult challenges faced by these family education programs. In general, programs have not developed formal curricula or materials to address this issue. The more formal inservice training sessions tend to focus on topics such as child development, early childhood education, and teaching techniques, rather than on interpersonal skills. One program, the McAllen School District, does require all of its parent educators to complete TESA (Teacher Expectation, Student Achievement) workshops along with other school staff. This training stresses high, positive expectations for all students and shows teachers how to be more responsive to low-achieving students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This training does not, however, address parent/staff relationships directly.

Staff development and education on working with disadvantaged parents appears to take place more informally and occurs through peer training. More than one program director viewed the inservice meetings as an opportunity for staff to discuss the "differences between their values and those of the participants and how these differences affect how and what the staff introduce to the parents." This kind of examination is considered to be particularly critical in programs staffed by professionals. Programs that use paraprofessional teachers believe that these individuals, by virtue of their shared experiences and background with participants, will be better able to work effectively with the families.

## STAFF RETENTION

According to project directors, staff turnover is generally not a problem in these programs. The positions for professional teachers in these programs appear to be perceived in a number of the communities as attractive jobs, both because the jobs are typically more flexible than regular school jobs and because the work is interesting and valuable, although not highly paid. Among paraprofessional staff, the jobs often are perceived as being relatively well paid and important work, especially in relation to other jobs available in the community. Turnover is, however, reported to be higher among paraprofessional than professional staff. Program directors indicate that paraprofessional staff move on as they find higher paying jobs, sometimes made possible by their job experience in the program. In this sense, program directors believe that turnover among paraprofesssional staff may be seen as a measure of program success.

Burnout also is not identified as a major problem for most programs studied. However, three program directors did identify staff burnout as a problem. In two of these programs, staff work with families that are quite needy, and staff are providing relatively intensive social support for the mothers. In the third program, school teachers run the parent activities in addition to their regular classroom jobs. The project director felt that even committed, enthusiastic teachers eventually run out of energy.

A number of the program directors cited the stability of their staff as a major factor in the program's effectiveness. In general, the staff seem to have high morale and a shared mission, which maintains their commitment to the job.

## RESPECT BETWEEN STAFF AND PARENTS

In the family education programs that were studied, staff are careful not to approach parents with a deficit orientation. In fact, programs typically explain their objectives in terms of helping parents to be more effective teachers for their children or in terms of helping the children become more successful, not in terms of remedying parent deficits. In their interactions with parents, staff in these programs also strive to maintain mutually respectful relationships in which parents are seen as valuable partners in the learning process.

Using individuals from the community as program staff is one way that programs promote this kind of mutuality between staff and parents. However, in addition to using community staff, the programs that appear to be most successful at establishing mutually respectful relationships between parents and staff have explicit program goals about respect for parents and are open about discussing the challenges of meeting these goals. In these programs, parent/staff relationships are discussed often in various contexts, such as examination of the appropriateness of curriculum materials, of how to best accommodate difficult family situations, and of altering goals for a family who is making less progress than expected.

### MUTUALITY IN PARENT/STAFF RELATIONS

Parents in the McAllen school district stated that the staff is what makes parent involvement in the schools work. Parents not only trust that the staff will do the best for their children, they also trust their relationship with the program staff enough to voice their concerns.

During a parent meeting at a migrant housing project, representatives from a community agency were present to provide information about programs for students. Since all the seats in the room were taken, the staff were standing at the back of the room and made their announcements from there. When the parental involvement staff asked for any questions, one parent got up and criticized the two agency representatives for speaking behind the parents. The parent requested that "if you want to talk to us, come and face us." With that, the agency staff walked to the front of the room and repeated their announcements.

Parents felt comfortable enough to voice their opinions, and staff cared enough to address these concerns.

The next chapter examines the curricula of the family education programs studied. The programs have developed a number of different curricula for working with families. However, regardless of the program's approach and its curriculum, the staff who implement the curricula are considered by virtually all of the programs to be critical to the program's effectiveness.

# CHAPTER 6

# CURRICULUM AND METHODS

## OVERVIEW

The family education programs in this study all are concerned with helping parents learn strategies to support their child's development and school-related achievement. Toward this end, the curricula of these programs share a focus on parent/child activities that encourage parents to practice these strategies.

**Curriculum Content.** The specific content and structure of the curricula vary across the programs. However, there is no evidence that any one content is best for all families or more effective than any other. For most programs, curriculum is seen as a structure to encourage and guide parents in positive, educationally supportive interactions with their children, rather than as a body of knowledge that parents are expected to acquire.

**Methods for Working with Families.** The methods used in teaching parents also differ across the programs, and each method offers certain advantages and disadvantages:

- **Home visits** offer an opportunity for building an intimate relationship between parent and staff as well as the chance for staff to demonstrate through role playing the desired parent/child interactions. However, home visits do not foster connections between parents or with outside institutions, such as the school.

- **Joint parent and child classes** provide parents with multiple models through observation of other parents as well as the opportunity for staff to watch parents interacting with their children and offer suggestions. Parents have to come to a center or school to attend classes, which may be difficult for some families; in addition, classes appear to be less supportive of the kinds of role playing that takes place in home visits.

- **Parent groups** permit parent-to-parent teaching, as well as the opportunity for parents to express themselves and gain confidence in the value of their ideas and experiences. Because such groups often meet at a center or school, hard-to-reach families may be less likely to attend.

**Sensitivity to Family Differences.** Program curricula reflect sensitivity to differences among program families in a variety of ways:

- **Bilingual staff and materials** are the most common method of accommodating the needs of non-English speaking families.

- **Varying curriculum content and approach** for individuals or groups of families is more difficult to achieve.

- **Flexibility in program agendas** is important for programs working with families facing a multitude of problems.

These curriculum issues are addressed in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

## PROGRAM FOCUS

All of these programs share a primary focus on helping parents develop strategies to support their children's development, especially cognitive development, and children's school-related achievement and success. This concern with the children's achievement is seen by many programs as one of the reasons that they are able to attract families; parents are interested and willing to get involved in these family education programs because they are motivated to help their children succeed.

At the same time, some of these programs pursue additional goals for parents beyond improvement of their parenting skills. Although only the ECFE program sets out to provide broader family support services as well as parent education, in most of the programs, staff spend a substantial amount of time working with parents to address individual real-life needs and problems. This broad focus beyond strictly didactic goals for parents is viewed by many programs as critical to sustaining family participation and effecting long-term changes.

The two literacy programs--Kenan and Project FIEL--focus explicitly on improving the parent's as well as the child's literacy development. The Kenan program also offers adult basic education classes for parents to work towards the goal of obtaining a GED certificate. Both HIPPY/Miami and Project AHEAD encourage parents to obtain additional education and training; HIPPY also gives parents information about vocational training opportunities. In addition, by hiring program participants as staff, these programs provide vocational opportunities for the parents. In McAllen, the Evening Study Centers offer basic skills training, including individualized computer programs, to improve parents' English and reading skills. An additional goal shared by a number of the programs targeted on families of school-age children is the improvement of home/school communication, as another means of enhancing the child's school performance.

Project AHEAD is distinctive among these programs in its focus on changing the school as well as the families. AHEAD provides staff development for school teachers and administrators in order to increase sensitivity and responsiveness toward low-income, minority families. In addition, part of the work that AHEAD does with families includes providing parents with information and strategies to empower them in their interactions with the school.

## CURRICULUM CONTENT

Exhibit 6.1 briefly describes the content and structure of the curriculum for the family education activities in each of the programs. As shown in the exhibit, the programs share a common focus on enhancing children's development and school-related success, which is reflected in common curriculum elements. In a majority of programs, the parent education curriculum is based on parent/child activities that are intended to encourage positive family interactions and to promote child development and achievement.

Programs differ in terms of the specificity and focus of the parent/child activities. Six programs have a set of predefined parent/child activities with accompanying written materials as the core of the curriculum:

- HIPPY/Miami follows the curriculum developed by the national HIPPY program. This curriculum consists of thirty lessons per year that are structured around key readiness and cognitive skills. For example, one week's home activity involves sorting activities for the parent to practice with the child such as sorting common objects (rocks, leaves) by type, size, or other characteristics. In addition, nine children's books are incorporated into each year's sequence.

- The curriculum for Project AHEAD is based on a set of monthly "Appetizers" or home activities. The Appetizers were developed by AHEAD based on the "home learning recipes" of Dorothy Rich's Megaskills, a home curriculum designed to build the skills crucial to children's success in school, such as confidence, responsibility, initiative, and perseverance. In addition, AHEAD has developed illustrated and easy-to-read materials for parents that explain the school district objectives for each grade level.

- Project Home Base has developed a collection of more than 200 home activities that parents can use to teach their child single concepts and verbal skills. For example, one home activity shows parents how to play a picture matching game with their child, using cards constructed by the parent and child from magazine pictures. In addition to its home activities, Home Base has developed a set of "Desirable Teaching Behaviors" that parents are encouraged to apply when doing the home activities, such as waiting and giving the child time to respond after the adult presents information or an idea to the child.

## Exhibit 6.1
## Description of Curriculum Materials in Family Education Programs

| | Content and Focus of Curriculum Components | Curriculum Source |
|---|---|---|
| **ECFE Program** | Parent/child activities focused on creative play<br>Parent group discussions on topics of parents' choice<br>Early childhood classroom program based on discovery learning, play | Developed by individual districts |
| **HIPPY/Miami** | Home visits based on 30 lessons/year structured around key readiness and cognitive skills<br>9 childrens' books incorporated into lessons/year<br>Parent/child meetings based on same curriculum as home visits | Developed by HIPPY/Israel |
| **Project Home Base** | Home visits based on set of 200+ parent/child activities developed over the years; curriculum of Desirable Teaching Behaviors to be used with tasks, such as giving child time to respond to parent question<br>Children's book left at home each week | Developed by program |
| **Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project** | Early childhood program follows High/Scope curriculum<br>Parent and Child Together Time based on classroom play activities extending High/Scope curriculum used with children<br>Adult Basic Education based on GED-preparation materials<br>Parent Time incorporates some commercial parenting curricula; also follows topics of parents' choice | Commercial materials<br>Commercial/program<br>Commercial materials<br>Commercial and program developed |
| **Project AHEAD** | Home visits based on monthly "Appetizers"--materials focusing on achievement-related attributes for parents to foster in their children (Megaskills) and on specific school and academic activities<br>Parent group cluster meetings also focus on Megaskills | Developed by program/ adapted from D. Rich Megaskills |
| **Family Study Institute** | Each course follows 3-lesson sequence describing family behavior that supports reading and studying, providing opportunity for practice, and conducting school-related home activities (e.g., keeping a family reading journal) | Developed by program |
| **McAllen Parental Involvement Program** | Evening Study Centers offer classes on ESL and parenting skills<br>Variety of parent education groups, including:<br>STEP/PECES--Systematic Training for Effective Parenting, English and Spanish versions<br>Keys for Better Living--program to increase positive family relations<br>Groups on family communication, home/school relationship | Developed by program<br><br>Commercial materials<br>Program developed<br>Program developed |
| **Project FIEL** | Parent/child classes engage in shared concrete learning activities that focus on language learning and include a storywriting activity and storybook demonstration<br>Parents select from home activity choices | Developed by program |
| **PREP** | Developmental early childhood curriculum<br>Guided observation of early childhood classroom<br>Parent time follows up on concepts observed in classroom and introduces related home activities<br>Parent education sessions: half follow program-selected topics, including "Footsteps" parenting series, and half follow unique needs of particular group of parents | Developed by program<br>Developed by program<br>Commercial and program developed |
| **Prestame Una Comadre** | Home visits based on parent teaching activities that can be incorporated into home routines, i.e., counting socks with children while mother is sorting laundry<br>Weekly small group meetings on parent education topics chosen by parents | Developed by program<br><br>Developed by program |
| **Syracuse Pre-K** | Early childhood classrooms follow developmental curriculum<br>Group sessions with social worker focus on parent education topics chosen by parents; alternate with parent/child session in classroom based around shared fun activities | Developed by program |
| **Academia del Pueblo** | Tutoring for children on language arts, ESL, math, based on individual assessment of need<br>Weekly classes for LEP parents-.<br>Monthly parent education sessions led by experts on variety of topics | Developed by program<br>Offered off site by local univ.<br>Developed by program |
| **Family Math** | Parent/child hands-on math activities, e.g., counting games, measuring objects in the home | Developed by program |
| **Kuban Parent Involvement Program** | Teachers plan sessions to descibe their curriculum objectives and content, parent role | Developed by program |
| **Parents in Touch** | Variety of parent education sessions on different topics (90+ seminars in 1989-90)<br>Program models, including:<br>TIPS-Math<br>Family-Math<br>Homework assistance | Developed by program<br><br>Adapted model<br>Commercial curriculum<br>Developed by program |
| **TIPS-Math** | Prototype homework activities involving parents, linked to school math curriculum | Developed by school staff |
| **ABT Program** | Kits of enrichment activities to do at home | Developed by program |

- The Family Study Institute has developed two courses with written lessons that explain to parents ways that the home environment can be structured to support learning. Each of the courses has three lesson units, which include a set of weekly tasks to be conducted at home by the parent. For example, the weekly tasks for one of the Studying at Home lessons include checking the child's study schedules for the week, helping the child start and keep a chart of what was learned in each assignment, and being an active listener for each child at least one minute each day.
- PREP assigns six home activities for parents to use with their children during the week following their preschool session. The home activities review and reinforce concepts that have been discussed in the guided observation (using a one-way mirror) of the preschool classroom, during which the parent educator indicates skills being addressed in the classroom, teaching techniques, problems and solutions. The home activities utilize items in the home, for example, demonstrating the concept of big and little by sorting different rags.
- The Family Math program uses hands-on math activities to encourage parents and children to work together on math. The activities include problem-solving exercises presented as family games, measurement and estimation activities to do at home with everyday objects, and games that require family members to do mental arithmetic.

Other programs use parent/child activities as the core of their curriculum but do not have a prespecified set of tasks that the program follows. For example, in Prestame Una Comadre, activities are incorporated into routine activities going on in the home, such as teaching children to count socks or identify colors when the parent is sorting laundry.

In ECFE, the Kenan Project, and the Syracuse Prekindergarten Program, the parent/child activities grow out of the early childhood curriculum. Parents work with their children on creative tasks that either are selected by the child or are linked to the activities in the classroom that day. For example, in the Kenan Project, the curriculum for the Parent and Child Together Time is an extension of the High/Scope curriculum model employed in the early childhood class. Children choose one activity each day to do with their parent; parents participate in the activities, following the children's plans and allowing children to lead. Each parent then chooses an activity to do with their child. At the end of the session, the early childhood teacher leads a group activity with parents and children, focusing on transfer of play activities to the home.

**Curriculum of Parent Groups.** Programs use parent group sessions to accomplish two goals: to provide more formal parent education and to encourage parent-to-parent sharing and support. For the more formal parent education sessions, some programs use commercial curricula. As Exhibit 6.1 shows, McAllen, Kenan, PREP, Parents in Touch, AHEAD, and HIPPY/Miami have specific curricula for parent group sessions. Parent support groups typically follow the interest and needs of the particular group of parents.

## METHODS OF DELIVERING THE CURRICULUM

Although programs have similar goals and a similar focus on parent/child activities, there are differences in the way in which the curriculum is communicated to parents--through individual home visits, parent/child classes, parent groups, or through written materials sent home without in-person training--and in the teaching methods used by program staff. There is no evidence that one approach works best with all families or with all staff. Instead, it is clear that each method brings with it trade-offs in terms of the types of families for which it is most effective, the kinds of staff/family relationships encouraged, and the kinds of skills parents need in order to participate.

**Home Visits.** Four of the programs--AHEAD, Home Base, HIPPY/Miami and Prestame una Comadre--work with parents on parent/child activities in home visits. All four programs have developed a set of concrete home activities that are introduced to parents in a particular order. In these activities, parents are shown how to work with their child on simple games or tasks that teach the child about basic concepts (same/different, spatial relationships, etc.). In the home visits, program staff model the kinds of teaching behaviors they would like parents to use and role play, with the staff person acting as the parent and the parent taking the role of the child.

Despite the fact that the curricula in these programs are relatively specific and structured, the home visit setting allows for individualization. The home visitors alter or adapt the particular activity being introduced, depending on the skills and interest of the parent. Also, the home visitor can address a family's individual circumstances and needs. In two of the programs observed, the home visits may run for as long as two hours, as the home visitor presents the planned activity and discusses personal issues with the parent.

Home visits also afford the opportunity to develop a personal and intimate relationship between parents and staff. This provides a number of benefits, particularly for parents who are distrustful or hesitant about participating in a formal program.

## HOME VISITS
## Project AHEAD

Each school day, parent educators walk the streets of the housing projects in south central Los Angeles going from one home visit to another. For about a half hour every two weeks, while the children are the school, parent educators and parents talk about education and school matters.

The school report card is the topic of one home visit. The parent educator asks if the parent has seen her child's report card and has it available. As they sit together looking at the report card, the parent educator comments on each grade, making supportive comments for both the parent and child, commenting that even small changes are positive changes. The parent educator suggests areas in which the parent might help the child, sometimes using as examples experiences with her own children.

The parent educator also asks the parent about activities undertaken since the last visit. These include completing an Appetizer activity. For example, one Appetizer is a calendar with each day assigned a letter of the alphabet. Parents are encouraged to have their child go through old newspapers or magazines and cut out words that begin with the letter of the day. The parent educator praises each activity done, and urges parents to commit (or continue to commit) 15 minutes a day for Appetizer activities. They then go over activities for the next visit.

At each visit, the parent educator leaves something with the family, such as the monthly appetizer, a book, or special requested materials. The parent also signs a card acknowledging the visit and writes down her current phone number. (Phones are frequently disconnected in the projects). Before leaving, the parent educator also says that she hopes to see the parent at the next parent cluster meeting (and gives the time and place).

The extent to which the parents are engaged in the home visits varies among the families. One parent systematically does each Appetizer activity; another uses other materials, such as flash cards. Her daughter, she said, loved the flash cards, was doing very well in spelling, and no longer stuttered. Another parent appeared not to get the Appetizer idea at all and did not interact much with the parent educator, although they have been seeing each other for over a year. When asked later, the family educator felt she had made substantial progress with that mother. Last year, the mother did not send her daughter to school. Now the child attends nearly every day, is dressed neatly and cleanly, and her kindergarten and first grade teachers say that she is learning.

# HOME VISITS
## Project Home Base

Home visits with disadvantaged families form the core activity of Project Home Base, with the relationship between parent educators and parents mutually accepted as a professional-client relationship, with the parent educator often referred to as a teacher. The parent educators, ranging in age from their thirties to mid-fifties, look and dress like the early elementary teachers several of them once were. The mothers are dressed less formally in jeans, t-shirts or blouses, or in house dresses.

One home visit observed was with a young mother and her two-year old daughter. The mother was developmentally delayed as a child and did not walk or talk until she was five years old, and now talks haltingly but understandably. The family lives in a run-down, three-room bungalow that is tidy but dirty and recently infested with head lice. We are warmly greeted by the mother and child, both of whom are clearly pleased to see the parent educator. The visit takes place in the living room, with the parent educator and mother sitting on chairs across from each other and the two-year-old daughter seated on the floor between them. The television set is so loud that I, seated on the sofa less than 10 feet away, must strain to hear.

The mother is very attentive to the parent educator, especially as the parent educator explains and models with the parent the new task (putting colored pegs in holes on a block) and new learning behavior (wait time). The parent educator uses the words "fine motor coordination," "hand-eye coordination," and "wait time". The mother watches the educator intently, nods slowly, and after a pause begins to model the educator's behavior, asking her daughter if she wants to play with the colored pegs. The daughter appears nonresponsive at first, then lifts the pegs with enthusiasm. The parent educator says: "That's very good. See how the wait time works. She just needs to get accustomed to the idea of a new game." The educator then encourages the mother to speak when playing with the child, such as "See, I'm putting the purple peg in now," and praises the mother as she and the child pick up and name the colors of other pegs as they put them in the holes.

The remainder of the lesson where a child's book is chosen, toys exchanged, and upcoming plans discussed, has much the same tone of teaching and gentle encouragement. The next visit, with an unemployed single parent who is a nursing aide, was similar but involved less direct teaching and less repetition.

Home visits, in general, require fewer social skills on the part of the parents and do not require parents to be sufficiently motivated to come to a center or school. Among the programs studied, the home visit programs tend to serve families that are relatively more isolated and economically disadvantaged. Further, the role-playing seen in home visits does not take place in the other approaches--the parent/child classes or the parent groups. The home visit brings an individual parent and staff member together in a "private" setting, which seems to support this teaching method.

At the same time, home visits offer the parent only limited connections with other parents or institutions. Home visits do not help isolated parents connect with the outside world, and do not provide an opportunity for informal learning and support from other parents. Three of the four home visit programs supplement the home visits with regularly scheduled group parent sessions that focus on the same parent/child activities as in the home visits, as well as on other topics of interest to the parents.

**Joint Parent and Child Classes.** In seven programs, parents and children work together on a shared task in a parent/child class at a school or center. In general, the curriculum of parent/child activities in these programs is less structured than in the home visit programs. Typically, parents and children work together on a creative or language activity (working with clay, writing a story together), often chosen by the child. In these classes, program staff observe and supervise the parent/child pairs, offering suggestions as to how a parent might question or encourage a child. Direct demonstration or modeling of teaching behaviors is less frequent than in the home visits. In the group sessions, parents are able to observe other parents interacting with their children, which provides multiple role models for the participants.

One of the disadvantages of this approach, which was mentioned by one of the program directors, is that some families feel uncomfortable being watched by staff and other parents as they interact with their child. Thus, this approach may not be suited to parents who are especially shy, who lack self-confidence about their own parenting, or who have limited social skills.

Although parent/child classes do bring parents together, they do not appear to provide ample opportunities for open-ended parent discussion. About half of the programs that have parent/child classes also bring parents together in parent discussion groups, to give parents a time to discuss topics of interest, to share experiences, and to socialize.

# PARENT/CHILD CLASSES
## Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project

Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) is a unique component of the Kenan model, where parents and children spend time together in a positive learning environment. The Kenan program emphasizes that child's play is "a time to learn and a time to grow," yet "undereducated parents often do not realize the value of play." The time together offers parents a chance to play with their child and to learn about ways of fostering positive parent-child interactions.

At the end of the morning's activities, parents join their children in the early childhood classroom. Parents sit next to their children and work together on an activity such as drawing, coloring, or reading a book. For part of the time, each child chooses the activity to do with his or her parent, followed by an activity of the parent's choice. Parents and children work in pairs--this is time for children to get individual attention from their parents, and for parents to learn about activities that are developmentally appropriate and of interest to their children. Children appear to be pleased to have their parents share their classroom and show off their competencies by suggesting "Mommy, do it this way."

The adult and early childhood teachers are both present during PACT time to model or facilitate positive parent-child interactions as well as to discover issues of child development and parenting that should be discussed during Parent Time. However, teachers mainly observe during PACT, letting parent and child negotiate the interactions.

**Parent Groups.** A number of the programs use parent groups as a primary method of teaching parents about behaviors that promote child development and achievement. These groups vary in the formality of the curriculum and whether the groups are led by a staff teacher or by parents. Regardless of these differences, programs recognize the powerful influence of the parent-to-parent teaching that takes place in the groups. Parents serve an important support function for each other, as they hear other parents' ideas, learn about other parents' problems and solutions, and relate their own concerns. Parent groups affirm for parents the value of their own and other parents' experiences and ideas.

The Family Study Institute works with parents in parent-run group sessions that follow a structured written curriculum. One component of the group is discussion of home activities that have been assigned to parents at a previous session. The FSI curriculum includes a small number of home tasks related to reading and studying, such as keeping a reading journal or a homework log, that parents can complete with their child. These tasks are introduced, discussed and practiced in the group sessions, and completed at home before the next group session. Similarly in PREP, six weekly home activities are introduced and demonstrated to the group of parents by the program staff; parents' experiences with the tasks during the week are discussed in the next week's session. In HIPPY/Miami and Project AHEAD, the parent groups discuss the topics that were addressed in the previous home visit.

In McAllen, a variety of parent education groups are offered. Some follow a more structured curriculum, such as the STEP program, while others cover topics such as health, nutrition and child development. The Evening Study Centers provide classes for parents in parent education and relationships with schools as well as basic skills and computer literacy.

**Written Curricula Only.** Two of the programs--TIPS-Math and the ABT Program--provide a curriculum of home activities but do not provide any in-person training. The advantages of this approach are that it is easy for schools to implement, it is low cost, and it can be made available to all parents in a classroom or school. These curricula alone, however, do not provide opportunities for parents to develop their personal-social skills or relationships, and involve parents less directly with the schools.

## PARENT-TO-PARENT TRAINING
## Family Study Institute's Reading at Home Course

At 7 p.m. on a Tuesday evening, 36 parents from a local elementary school meet in the school library for their first training session in the "Reading at Home" course. These parents have all received a postcard and also a personal call from their group leader (another parent in the school) reminding them about the meeting. As the parents arrive, they are warmly greeted by the group leaders; also present in a support capacity are the FSI coordinator for the school (a volunteer teacher) and one of the FSI program staff. The school principal has also dropped in briefly to greet parents. Parents fill out and put on name tags.

The room has been carefully prepared. Coffee is ready, and at three tables questionnaires and pencils are set out. Parents are conversing informally with one another over coffee and cookies. Several young children are sitting on a sofa, in the back corner, reading and doing puzzles. An older child, maybe 13 or 14 years old, is charged with supervising them while their parents are taking the class.

At 7:15 p.m., one of the group leaders, Maria, calls the session to order. Parents sit down at the table where their group leader is waiting. Maria has a group of eight parents, all women. Maria's group is conducted in Spanish. Parents begin by completing a questionnaire. Maria helps out one of the parents who has some trouble understanding it. Maria collects the questionnaires and begins the session. She is enthusiastic and animated in describing to the parents how much "fun we're going to have tonight." After this introduction, Maria distributes FSI reading buttons, and asks the parents to wear them during the training tonight and explains that the buttons will be returned at the end of the session, although parents will be allowed to keep the buttons at the end of the course.

Maria then distributes the first booklet, "Storytelling," and begins reading verbatim, in Spanish, the "Welcome" introduction on page 1. She continues reading about the "Parts of a Story," taking care to read slowly and look up while she is reading to make sure that the parents are following her. After reading the description of "Active Listening," Maria asks each parent to share something about one of their child's favorite stories. After each parent makes her contribution, Maria leads the group in an enthusiastic round of applause.

Maria becomes particularly enthusiastic while reading about story circles. She assures the parents that creating a story together is going to be great fun. She then reads an introduction to a story after which each parent makes a contribution in order to build a complete story. When the last parent has contributed to the story, Maria leads the group in a rousing round of applause.

Maria continues reading through the description of "Reading Journal," stopping for parent questions or input where requested. Maria ends with discussion of the "Taking It Home" section, which summarizes the main points of the session and assigns tasks for the week--holding a storytelling session with the family and using a story circle, teaching and using active listening, and keeping a reading journal of what the parent reads that week. Parents are asked to sign their names in the book as a commitment to complete the three home tasks before the next session. Upon completion of the booklet, Maria collects the FSI reading buttons, and the parents get to take their booklets home. The session ends with a short coffee break before parents go home.

# PARENT DISCUSSION GROUPS
## Early Childhood Family Education Program

A two-hour weekly visit to the neighborhood ECFE center is a typical child and parent preschool program. Activity begins with joint discovery play and shared quality time, followed by an hour of separate parent discussions and child activity. The visit concludes with shared time and a closing ceremony.

At one session for 4-year-olds, each parent and child was greeted by name, and the children scampered away to the toys. Parents stood talking animatedly, unwinding with each other. The opening ceremony and shared play time were foreshortened as parents and children went their separate ways for the next hour.

Children's activities focused on discovery play, cooperation with others, making choices, and acting independently. Daily tasks, such as pouring milk, were the basis of the children's work, using instruments adapted to their size and motor skills. Other activities included finger painting with two colors on an easel and making multi-colored paper chains.

The parents' discussion group started with our asking questions about why they participated and what program benefits were. In the midst of questions about what children were getting out of the program, one mother said that her son must have told her five times about how he had learned to pour milk for himself. She then added that she wasn't going to let him pour milk at home, because he couldn't hold the half-gallon container. This prompted an animated exchange among the mothers present. One mentioned that the containers in the early childhood room were small, so that kids could hold them without spilling the milk. Another said she had just bought a small container for $1.25 for her child to practice with. Yet another parent, holding a water-filled 12 ounce plastic Mountain Dew bottle, said she gives old Mountain Dew bottles to her kids to practice. She then laughed and said: I use them too. This idea appealed to the mother who had initiated the discussion, and she said that she would try that.

The exchange among parents appeared typical of the group, and helped convey why the parents came each week–to enjoy friends, to learn how to teach and cope with their children better, and to break the isolation faced by parents and their children.

## PARENT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES
## McAllen Parental Involvement Program

Evening Study Centers are open two nights a week at three elementary schools in the McAllen district. At one site, about 100 mothers and fathers were sitting at tables in the school library discussing with a parent involvement coordinator the causes and effects of dropping out of school. The session was organized around three questions: (1) What are the factors related to dropping out of school? (2) What are the consequences of dropping out of school? and (3) What are some recommendations to reduce the dropout problem? Parents were given a handout with the questions and a number of possible answers listed in both Spanish and English to encourage discussion as well as speaking English. The importance of parental involvement and parents' responsibilities in their children's education was stressed.

At another school, parents were grouped into classes of 20-25 people. In one class, a teacher from the district presented the English words necessary for parents to communicate with teachers about their children's school performance. Words such as motivation, attention, and promotion were written on the blackboard and parents recited the English pronunciation of the word after the teacher explained the meaning in Spanish. While one group of parents was in parenting class, another group was in the computer lab working on individualized programs to improve their English and reading skills. Headphones and audio tapes enabled adults with limited reading ability to receive directions and instructions.

In addition to providing parents with opportunities for academic instruction and parenting information, staff indicated that an important goal of the Evening Study Centers is to make parents feel comfortable inside the school building. As one staff put it, they want to make parents realize "that school is the place to be." Parents not only improve their own skills, but also give their children the message that education is important and valued by parents. Once parents become more at ease in the school through the Evening Study Centers, they feel more comfortable volunteering at the school during the day. At one of the study centers, parents made laminated bookmarks printed with incentives for learning and reading, such as:

- Home-School-Community: Together we can make good things happen.
- Parents' involvement in school increases a child's enthusiasm for learning.
- Live in another world--Read a fantasy.

# ACCOMMODATING THE CURRICULUM TO FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND DIFFERENCES

An important issue for programs serving disadvantaged and minority families is how to develop curricula that are relevant and sensitive to each family's language, cultural, and individual needs. Among these family education programs, sensitivity to differences among the program families is shown in a number of ways:

- Language differences are accommodated through translating materials or using bilingual staff.
- Programs use staff who are similar to the parents in terms of background, race and/or ethnicity.
- Programs vary curriculum content and teaching approach for different cultural groups.
- Curriculum agendas are flexible, in order to accommodate family circumstances.

## Accommodating Language Differences

Many programs work with families for whom English is not the primary language in the home. Programs use two strategies for accommodating language differences: translating the written materials into other languages and using bilingual staff.

**Languages in which the Curriculum is Written.** The majority of programs serve at least some parents with limited English proficiency. In most programs, the written curriculum materials are available in Spanish. However, even where Spanish materials are available, programs do not always use them. In one program, for instance, the staff felt that the lessons should be taught in English, because the children would be taught in English in school, and, in addition, working with parents in Spanish "doesn't do anything for the parent" because then the parents have no motivation to learn English.

Programs are less well-prepared to work with other language groups. However, in the schools implementing the FSI courses, groups are conducted in a variety of other languages (e.g., Urdu, Chinese), as long as there is a parent who can translate the written materials as it is read to parents.

**Bilingual Staff.** Most of the programs working with limited-English-proficient parents have some bilingual teachers. About half of the programs that work with predominantly non-English speaking parents have all bilingual staff.

## Accommodating Cultural/Ethnic Differences

**Variation in Curriculum Content/Approach.** Addressing cultural and ethnic differences in actual curriculum content and approach is more difficult than simply translating materials or arranging a flexible schedule of activities. This kind of variation was less often evident in the programs. Two programs in particular seem to have attempted to make these efforts.

The McAllen program demonstrates responsiveness in its curriculum to the values of the Hispanic community it serves. This is captured in the vignette below.

### SENSITIVITY TO CULTURAL VALUES

At a parent education session in a migrant housing project, participants were discussing involvement in the schools. The parent coordinator leading the meeting was aware of attitudes in the Hispanic community that women should stay in the home taking care of the children. Therefore, before discussing how parents should interact with the schools, the parent coordinator drew a picture of a house with a woman inside. He then asked the group of fathers and mothers if the woman should stay in the house or go outside. Some of the men in the group expressed strong opinions that the women should stay in the house, while the women disagreed, saying that it was their role to get involved in their children's education. The leader acted as facilitator and with humor got the men to agree that their wives could go to the school if it would help their children. In this session, the staff member was able to present an important message about parent involvement in the school and also deal directly with the cultural values that work against this outside involvement for women.

The McAllen program staff also are aware of the significance for the program of the high value the community places on education and teachers. On the one hand, these values make it easier for program staff to be accepted in the community and for their message to be regarded as important. On the other hand, the attitudes make parents cautious about taking an active role in the schools and in becoming teachers of their own children. Other researchers have noted that the Hispanic culture does not encourage parents' participation in their children's education (Zela-Koort and Nadine, 1990). Program staff in McAllen feel that it is important to address these issues directly before assuming that parents will be able to increase their involvement with schools.

The ways that Project AHEAD staff work with parents also reflect particular sensitivity to and understanding of the values and life circumstances of program families. Many parents targeted by the program are socially isolated and hesitant to participate in formal programs. Staff are nonjudgmental about the families, go to great lengths to set up home visits that are positive experiences for the parents, and welcome any parent who comes to parent cluster meetings.

**Using Staff Similar to Program Families.** A number of these programs hire staff that share ethnic, cultural, and background characteristics of the families in the program. Using staff similar to the program parents not only makes the staff more acceptable and credible to the parents, it also increases the chances that the staff will be sensitive to families' circumstances. Although most programs have one or more minority staff, most do not have predominantly minority staff. About half of the programs that work predominantly with minority families have predominantly minority staff.

**Flexibility in Curriculum Agendas.** Just as programs need to be flexible in implementing program activities, flexibility in the curriculum also is important if a program is to be sensitive to family circumstances. Changes in a family's home situation or a sudden crisis may call for the program staff to change the agenda of the session with the parent, in order to be able to focus on the more salient problem.

### ACCOMMODATING FAMILY NEEDS THROUGH A FLEXIBLE CURRICULUM

Project AHEAD demonstrates flexibility in their curriculum approach with families. Family educators go to each home visit with a plan for the day's discussion. In one home visit, the plan was to discuss the child's report card with the parent. However, the agenda was changed because of a crisis in the house--harassment by an abusive husband. The family educator judged that the problem was crucial enough to warrant changing the agenda and dealing with a topic that went beyond the child's educational experiences.

Family educators in Project AHEAD spoke of making home visits to families whose food stamps had run out two days before the end of the month. Because the child cannot function in school without food, the educators felt that it was important to work with the mother to obtain food, even though this was not part of the official curriculum.

All of the programs that conduct home visits mention the importance of being able to modify the agenda for the visit from time to time, if a parent needs help with a crisis or new problem. This flexibility is seen by programs as an important indicator of their responsiveness to the individual needs of families. Programs try to be attuned to addressing family problems that are direct barriers to the learning process and still keep within the education focus of the program, which is their first priority. In general, programs refer families to other agencies for help in handling serious life crises.

Flexibility also is essential in dealing with the extended family arrangements in the populations being served by the programs. Programs need to be able to accommodate a varying number of different individuals at any home visit or parent group, as well as changes in family members with whom a parent may be residing. Awareness of the family structure and circumstances appears to be crucial if these programs are to be successful working with families.

# CHAPTER 7

# COLLABORATING WITH THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## OVERVIEW

The involvement of schools in family education programs is an important development in the field, and all family education programs in this study have been developed or implemented in public school settings. At the same time, the seventeen programs vary as to the exact form of the school district's involvement in the development and day-to-day operations of the program. In general, collaborations with school districts occur at the administrative level rather than the classroom level. Although programs have administrative linkages through the district's organizational structure, shared space and facilities, or funding mechanisms, it is more difficult to build close ties between the programs and classroom instruction and teachers.

Operating family education programs within school districts offers certain benefits both for the programs and the schools. Advantages of the collaboration include:

- **Access to school resources,** such as federal funding, administrative support, and in-kind donation of space and facilities;
- **Connecting with families,** particularly in areas where the schools have a more positive image than other social service agencies, may increase parents' acceptance of the program and lead to greater understanding by school staff of parents' attitudes and behavior;
- **Linking homes and classroom instruction** through parent group meetings and, less frequently, through home visits; and
- **Providing activities to ease the transition** from early childhood education to kindergarten.

Program and school staff identify several factors that facilitate positive relationships with schools, including:

- **Close physical and personal connections between program and district staff,** including creating organizational paths to maximize interaction, placing offices and program activities in close proximity to other district programs, and hiring staff with prior experience in the district;
- **Strong administrative leadership and support** by district and school staff through a commitment to parent involvement and integration of program philosophy into district and school building goals;
- **Complementing rather than competing with other programs** for funding and administrative autonomy; and

- **Establishing a broad base of support** by school staff, parents, and the business community through information and opportunities for participation.

These family education programs face a number of challenges integrating program activities into the larger school district, including:

- **Sharing space with school programs, adapting materials to the needs of adult students and young children, and adhering to personnel regulations** and school district policies; and

- **Building connections between early childhood and K-12 programs and integrating pilot or small-scale programs** into large school districts.

The issues in collaborating with the school districts are discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter.

## TYPES OF COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Exhibit 7.1 identifies whether the family education programs in the study were developed by school personnel or by agencies outside of the school, as well as the location of the day-to-day operations of the programs. As the exhibit shows, organizations independent of the school district have developed and continue to run five family education programs. At the other end of the continuum, six programs were developed by school district staff who continue to be responsible for program administration. Six programs were developed by organizations outside of the school district and have been adopted by district staff who oversee day-to-day operations.

The primary linkages between family education programs and the wider school community occur at the administrative level rather than the classroom level. In those cases where schools have developed family education programs, the initial concept and development effort appear to have come from district administrators, and these programs continue to be implemented by district-level staff rather than classroom teachers. However, classroom teachers are involved in training for the FSI courses, in adapting the TIPS-Math programs, and in implementing the Kuban and Parents in Touch programs.

## Exhibit 7.1
## Relationships Between Family Education Programs and Public School Districts

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AHEAD | ECFE | McAllen |
| Academia del Pueblo | HIPPY | Project Home Base |
| Prestame Una Comadre | Family Study Institute | Kuban |
| Project FIEL | Kenan | Parents in Touch |
| | ABT | PREP |
| | Family Math | Syracuse Pre-K |
| | TIPS-Math | |
| **Developed by Organization Independent of Schools, Administration Outside of Schools** | **Developed Outside, Administered by School** | **Developed by School, Administered by School** |

## ADVANTAGES OF COLLABORATING WITH SCHOOLS

Locating family education programs in school districts offers advantages to the schools as well as the programs. In this section, the advantages that have been experienced by both parties involved in the collaboration are discussed.

### School Resources

Family education programs use a combination of funding sources to pay for program staff and services. The types of funds utilized by the seven case study sites are displayed in Exhibit 7.2. Most programs rely on federal, state or private monies as the primary funding source(s). Six programs contribute local funds from either the school district or local tax levies to augment their primary sources.

Although local funding is not the primary source of money in family education programs, collaboration with school districts provides family education programs access to federal and state funds designated for local education agencies, which independent social service agencies could not access. For example, four of the seven in-depth sites use federal Chapter 1 or Chapter 2 monies to support family education programs. Thus, for the most part, collaborating with school districts offers financial advantages for the programs.

In addition, the majority of family education programs utilize school facilities at no cost to the program. This includes space for program activities as well as utilities, office equipment and maintenance. Programs also have the benefit of administrative support, which reduces the number of separate administrators needed for the program and frees funds for direct service delivery. In some cases, district clerical support is available to program staff, but more often programs hire their own support staff.

### Connecting with Families

In some communities and cultural groups, the fact that programs are connected with the school district facilitates recruitment and participation. The public schools often have a more positive image than social service agencies, which many parents perceive as intrusive and intent on denying them public assistance benefits. The positive view of schools is more typical of rural and Hispanic communities. For example, in HIPPY/Miami and McAllen, the fact that the parent educators/home visitors work for the school district creates a sense of trust and respect by program families, which strengthens connections with families. Staff in Project FIEL report that program retention is higher in sites located at schools rather than other centers.

## Exhibit 7.2
## Funding Sources for Family Education Programs

| Program | Funding Source | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Federal | State | Local | Private | Other |
| ECFE | --- | ECFE monies* | Local tax levies | Foundations | Sliding scale parent fees |
| HIPPY/Miami | Chapter 2* | --- | Dade County School District | National Council of Jewish Women | Local businesses |
| Project Home Base | Chapter 1 | Special Education and Early Childhood Education* | Local tax levies | --- | --- |
| Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project | Adult Education Act | --- | School district funds | Kenan Charitable Trust* | |
| Project AHEAD | --- | School desegregation funds* | L.A. Unified School District | Martin Luther King Legacy Association | --- |
| Family Study Institute | Chapter 1 funds through local schools* | --- | Individual school budgets | Foundations | Corporations |
| McAllen Parental Involvement Project | Chapter 1 and Chapter 2* | --- | McAllen School District | --- | Local businesses |

* Primary source of funding

Once parents feel comfortable in the school, they often become more involved in school activities. In this way, family education programs for disadvantaged families have an impact on the types of parents who get involved in schools. For example, a principal affiliated with the Kenan program reported that one parent, with little prior involvement in the schools, had become a member of the PTA's executive committee.

Although this activism may be threatening to school personnel, many staff interviewed feel that it is a positive change and contributes to educational reform. For example, a principal in Chicago praised the FSI Program for getting parents actively involved in the schools. In an era of community participation in school governance and school councils, parents who are actively involved in schools tend to feel more positive about the schools and are more supportive of the teaching and administrative staff. In the Kuban School Program in Phoenix, teachers had interpreted parents' reluctance to come to school to be lack of concern for their children's education; as a result of the parent involvement program, parents are more active in the schools and teachers have a more positive attitude. A principal in Yakima, Washington, reports that increased participation has changed the way schools view parents--one school recently invited parents to join the interviewing team to hire a new principal.

In a number of schools, the success of the family education program has spurred the district to institute other programs for disadvantaged families. In some cases, the format of the family education program has been adopted for other programs in the district. For example, as a result of the success of Project Home Base, a greater number of teachers in Yakima Public Schools now do more parent conferences and home visits with families--elementary teachers have a shortened school day each week in order to conduct conferences and home visits, which are now a routine practice before children enter junior and senior high school.

Programs that include home-based components can connect with families and students' home life in ways that the classroom teachers cannot. For example, staff in the Los Angeles Unified School District praised Project AHEAD for its ability to communicate with hard-to-reach families. Because the family educators from Project AHEAD are invited into homes when school district staff are not, they are able to talk with families about health issues and school absences, and provide feedback to school staff and insights about events in the family that explain students' school behavior. In this way, school staff come to better understand the home environment of their students and to be more tolerant of racial and cultural differences. Staff who are of the same cultural or ethnic group as families can be a valuable resource for teachers who are from different ethnic groups. For example, in Academia del Pueblo, teachers in the district are mostly white, and they seek out the Hispanic program staff to discuss activities and approaches that are culturally appropriate.

Programs also help families understand the culture of the school and work within school rules. For example, school staff in Los Angeles reported that before Project AHEAD began working with families, parents often were aggressive and combative when coming to the school with concerns. After participating in the program, parents learned that the school staff were concerned and willing to listen, and the relationships became more collaborative.

### Linking Homes and Classrooms

Through their connections with families, family education programs offer new avenues for school districts to communicate with families. A number of family education programs focus parent group meetings on issues related to classroom instruction. For example, TIPS and Family Math were created to extend classroom instruction to family learning experiences. The FSI courses are designed to help parents supervise their children's study habits and foster a positive learning environment at home.

Other programs have more general discussions during parent meetings of topics related to classroom instruction, curriculum innovations and district curriculum policies. For example, in HIPPY/Miami the assertive discipline program that is being implemented in the district was presented to parents and discussed at a special day-long family event. In McAllen, one parent group meeting at a junior high school provided a forum for parents to hear and ask questions about a human sexuality course under consideration.

Additional vehicles for presenting information about classroom instruction include individual home visits as well as printed materials. In Project AHEAD, parent educators review student report cards with parents and prepare them for parent-teacher conferences; in addition, a mid-year skills event informs parents about student readiness testing. Programs also provide information to parents about grade-level curriculum goals and the specific skills that children should know by the end of each school year. AHEAD staff also work directly with school staff to achieve educational objectives for program children, as shown in the vignette on the following page.

## PROGRAM AND SCHOOL STAFF WORKING TOGETHER

In one kindergarten class in Los Angeles, a child six years old with no preschool experience was coming to class only two or three times a week. The teacher did not want the child to feel different from other children and had sought unsuccessfully to have the mother come to school. She said that she had "just pushed and pushed and pushed the child to come to school, try the homework, and be focused." Project AHEAD started working with the family. By the end of the semester, the teacher reported that the child had come to school almost every day and was making learning gains. Project AHEAD continues to work with the family, and the child's first grade teacher reports that she is attending almost every day and learning the material.

### Transition Activities

Linking programs for families of preschool children with school districts can have an impact on the types of activities for young children offered by the district. This positive effect can be particularly powerful when school districts do not offer early childhood programs. Having staff knowledgeable about early childhood education and development can move schools toward curricula in the primary grades that are geared to young children.

In addition, early childhood family education staff often get districts thinking about transition activities for young children entering the public schools. For example, HIPPY/Miami staff bring program children into the kindergarten classrooms in the spring prior to school entry. ECFE is beginning to do the same in some districts.

### Staff Development

Sharing knowledge through joint staff development is an area where the collaboration between family education programs and school districts could benefit the school staff as well as program staff. There is the potential for family education programs to have an impact on the attitudes and knowledge of school staff, particularly in areas such as adult education, early childhood education, and working with disadvantaged and minority families. However, few programs hold joint staff development with district staff.

Where family education staff are hired by the district and operate their programs within the schools, they are invited to attend school faculty meetings. However, differences in schedules often make attendance difficult. Staff from family education programs might occasionally attend faculty meetings to describe program activities to school district staff, but there are few examples where teachers and direct service staff from family education programs have joint workshops. One exception is McAllen, Texas, where the parental involvement coordinators join other district administrators and teachers at special TESA (Teacher Expectation, Student Achievement) training sessions focused on working with low-achieving students. Staff from Academia del Pueblo also participate in joint workshops with school staff.

Staff training and development is more likely to be held jointly for administrators from the district and the family education program. This is especially true in programs where the program director or coordinator is closely linked to the district administrative structure.

## FACTORS THAT FACILITATE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

Program and school staff identify a number of factors that contribute to positive relationships with schools. Factors that appear to facilitate collaboration with the public schools include:

- Close physical and personal connections between the program and the school district;
- Strong administrative leadership and support;
- Complementing rather than competing with other district programs; and
- Building a broad base of support in the district and community.

Each of these factors is discussed below.

### Close Physical and Personal Connections

The location of the family education program within the district hierarchy and even the location of staff offices both play a part in the integration of program activities. The day-to-day interactions among district and program staff and the personal relationships forged can increase the acceptance of family education programs by district staff.

**Location of Administrative Offices.** When program staff are housed within the main district administration building, programs seem to be better connected with other district programs than those housed in satellite office space or separate buildings. Often family education programs have a choice about placement within the district organization, and two of the programs that were visited have recently changed their administrative structure. The Kenan program moved its coordinator's office from adult education to early childhood and child care in order to facilitate integration with other early childhood resources in the district. The McAllen school district transferred its Parental Involvement Program from the supervision of Chapter 1 and other federal programs to districtwide programs, as an indication that parental involvement goes beyond federal mandates to become a primary goal of the district. In both cases, district staff recognize that physical location and administrative linkages are integrally related.

**Location of Program Activities.** A second issue is the location of program activities--programs that meet with parents in separate mobile units are often seen as literally outside of the regular school program. The impact of program placement can be subtle, but the culture of the school building can be quite sensitive to these messages. For example, one of the principals of an elementary school where a Kenan program takes place moved the Kenan classrooms from the end of the hallway to the middle of the corridor in order to integrate the program more fully into the overall school community.

**Personal Connections.** As is the case in most settings, human relationships facilitate linkages between separate administrative components. Existing personal connections between program staff and district staff seems to make a difference in building bridges to the family education programs. For example, the coordinator of HIPPY/ Miami had been a teacher in the district for several years prior to accepting an administrative position in the program; the close friendships she had developed with teachers and principals in the district provided a foundation for working with school district staff to recruit families and find space for program activities at elementary school sites. Similarly, the program director of AHEAD had taught in a school where the current assistant superintendent had been principal. These examples suggest that promoting staff from within the district to administrative positions in family education programs may facilitate the acceptance of the programs by district staff.

### Administrative Leadership and Support

Support by district and school level administrators is a central component of positive relationships with schools. There are a number of elements to this support, which are discussed below.

**Strong District Leadership.** The message from administrators that family education and parental involvement are valued and create good schools is evident in a number of programs. In McAllen, the superintendent has adopted the six principles of effective schools, which include parental involvement, as primary districtwide goals and criteria for staff evaluations.

**Role of the Principal.** School building administrators play a key role in integrating family education programs in schoolwide projects. Generally, programs that are implemented at the school-building level have closer links to the classroom teacher than programs implemented at the district level. Also, programs in which the core family education activities occur at school sites have more involved principals than home-based programs. For example, in the Kenan program, where child and parent activities take place in elementary schools, the school principals are involved in hiring the family education staff and determining how to integrate the program into the full school agenda. One principal at an elementary school with a Kenan site felt strongly that schools should become community learning facilities. His philosophy supports an environment that welcomes adults into schools as parents and learners, and encourages connections between the family education program and other school activities. Similarly, in FSI, school principals choose to institute the program in schools, recommend teachers and parents for the leadership teams, and orient other school staff to the program. Where program activities include group parent meetings, principals often greet parents at the start of the year. In McAllen, for example, most group meetings begin with a welcoming statement by the principal.

### Complementing Rather than Competing with Other District Programs

Staff from several family education programs stress the need to share information with district staff about the program and its goals. When family education programs are seen as complementing or assisting other district programs rather than competing with them, there seems to be more acceptance by and integration with other school programs. Competition can occur, however, over funding and professional expertise.

**Sharing Funding Sources.** As discussed earlier, none of the family education programs visited rely solely on district monies to fund program activities. In some cases, such as Project Home Base and ECFE, even when funds are from local sources, monies are generated from local tax levies earmarked specifically for these programs rather than from the regular K-12 school budget. While some funds for supplies and other materials do come from local school budgets, the view is that most school budgets are stretched to their limits with staff salaries and other regular school program costs. In addition, most school districts do not have a line item marked "family education." Thus, other funding sources are needed to pay the costs of family education programs.

**Respecting Professional Expertise.** The relationships between family education staff and classroom teachers sometimes can be strained. Teachers may perceive family education staff, who have close relationships with families, as encroaching on their territory.

Program staff who describe good relationships with school staff emphasize that the family education program is intended to help rather than compete with teachers in their primary role of educating students. It also is important to let school staff know that the family education program seeks to improve the home-school relationship and families' support of education. For example, FSI staff make it clear to teachers that their parent groups are intended to help parents create a structured environment for learning that can be applied to any subject area, and not to teach content-specific material. In this way, teachers see the program as supportive of their own efforts in the classroom.

### Broad Base of Support

In a number of sites, the family education program for disadvantaged families is one component of a district-wide program open to all families. When family education activities are open to all district residents, the program has higher visibility and greater support. Several districts also work very hard to establish positive links with the local business community. Both strategies serve to inform parents and community members about the family education program, and facilitate the integration of programs. In addition, these activities have paid off for programs by facilitating approval of local bond issues to fund programs and as a way of directly obtaining additional sources of funding.

## CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATING WITH SCHOOLS

These family education programs face a number of challenges when seeking to integrate program activities into the larger school district. To some extent, the programs experience the same difficulties as other categorical programs, such as Chapter 1 and bilingual education, that are not part of the standard K-12 educational curriculum. Collaboration between family education programs and the public schools can create tensions for programs that are trying to be flexible, responsive and relevant to families. District policies and procedures can create barriers to implementing a family education program. In addition, family education programs linked with the public schools have to deal with any negative views of the schools that parents have as well as parents' past experiences from their own education.

In this section, we discuss the collaboration issues faced by these family education programs, including funding, materials, adults as students, personnel regulations, and operating pilot and early childhood programs.

### Control over Funding Decisions

Although generally a positive consequence of collaborations with school districts, joint funding through the district can negatively affect family education programs. Projects administered by outside organizations contribute local funds to the district's fiscal agent while those administered by the school district incorporate all sources of funds into the district's operating budget. In both cases, program operating funds are utilized according to district rules and regulations. As a result, program materials and supplies must comply with the district's purchasing timetables and vendors.

Additional problems arise when the district decreases its funding of family education programs. For example, in Project AHEAD, the district reduced funds allocated for the program and stipulated the schools in which the program could be implemented.

### Providing Appropriate Materials for Young Children and Adults

Many family education programs rely on materials that are different from those of the regular school curriculum. These include materials for parents such as adult education books as well as child development and parenting information. Programs working with limited-English-proficient adults also need materials translated or published in other languages. Programs working with younger children need age-appropriate toys, books and manipulative materials. If school districts do not have other adult education or preschool programs, obtaining these materials through standard district channels can require additional effort.

## Accommodating Adults as Students

Districts often are not prepared to have adults as students in elementary facilities. Some issues are obvious, such as the size of furniture and the availability of rest rooms. There also are more subtle issues involved in trying to encourage hard-to-reach adults, who may have negative views of school from their own educational experiences, to come back to school. These issues include rules that the district has for younger students that may be quite restrictive for adults, such as eating in classrooms, smoking on school grounds, and leaving the classroom as needed.

In addition, transporting adults to a center can be problematic. In some states, it is not legal to have adults on school buses. One program solved this problem by expanding the policy to define the adults as students in the district, and could then legally use district transportation.

## Sharing Space and Facilities

Many family education programs share meeting space with school districts for parents' and children's activities. For example, in FSI, Project AHEAD and HIPPY/ Miami, the group parent meetings are held in local school sites, such as classrooms, the cafeteria or the library. In the Kenan program, the classes for parents and children take place in two classrooms in each of three elementary schools. In each case, this space is considered to be an in-kind contribution by the school district.

Finding adequate space within schools for parent group meetings and classes can be difficult. In some programs, space is shared with district programs when not in use by family education programs. Programs that need dedicated space for adult and child classrooms place greater burdens on districts than do programs needing more infrequent meeting space. In either situation, program staff emphasize the importance of being flexible in finding meeting space and in being sensitive to school staff's concerns. For example, in one program, teachers were concerned that parents would be using the teachers' room, and staff were careful to "leave the room cleaner than they found it." In another program, parent meetings are scheduled around student activities in the school library.

## Adhering to District Personnel Regulations

When school districts administer the family education program, program staff are hired by the district and must adhere to the district's regulations and policies regarding salaries and benefits. However, family education programs may utilize staffing positions not regularly identified on the district roster. For example, adult education teachers in many districts are paid on a part-time basis; if family education programs offer full-time adult education, they still might be prohibited from hiring adult educators on a full-time basis.

Programs with home visitors, whether they are credentialed teachers or paraprofessionals, often have to defend the job responsibilities of staff who are not in the classroom. Some programs have to increase the size of staff's caseload to justify their salary; other programs pay home visitors less than regular teachers. In several family education programs, home visitors are underpaid in relation to other personnel in the district--in one program, the professional home visitors are paid less than bus drivers in the district; in another program, paraprofessional home visitors make less than they would receive from public assistance.

### Operating Early Childhood Education Programs in Elementary Schools

Family education programs for parents of young children as well as programs with a preschool component often have a more difficult time building linkages with the school district than programs for school-age children. Program schedules, staff qualifications and program activities often appear quite different from "regular" school programs. In addition, staff salaries in early childhood programs often are substantially less than those of teachers in the elementary grades. Staff recommended more joint inservice sessions for early childhood and K-12 staff as well as more opportunities for district staff to learn about and observe the family education program.

### Integrating Small or Pilot Programs

Developing positive connections with school staff also is more difficult for family education programs implemented on a small scale (e.g., three or four sites) within a large school district. For these programs, the location of program activities, the administrative structure, personal connections, and other administrative linkages provide important opportunities for communication and collaboration with school district staff.

# CHAPTER 8

# EVALUATING FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## OVERVIEW

As described in Chapter 1, some evidence of program impact was a criterion for selection into the study. The seven in-depth sites all provided some evidence of impact on children and adults/parents. The ten telephone sites generally have conducted less formal evaluation studies. Overall, the family education programs studied have not carried out summative evaluations with rigorous, experimental designs. With limited resources, programs are more likely to gather information to document program activities and to indicate areas for program improvement, which reflects the programs' first priority of service delivery. Summative evaluations tend to be conducted when programs are seeking additional funding for program or dissemination activities. These outcome evaluations generally rely on quasi-experimental designs such as gains from pretest to posttest for program participants or posttest-only data for program and comparison groups.

When outcome evaluations are undertaken, programs use a variety of data collection measures:

- **Parent questionnaires are the most common type of data collection instrument** and are used to obtain information about perceived program impacts as well as parents' ratings of program activities and students' performance.

- **Standardized tests of children's abilities** are frequently used as an evaluation measure at the preschool and elementary level; tests of adults' basic skills are administered less frequently, and only in programs with a strong adult education component.

- **Teacher ratings, student questionnaires and school records of grades and attendance** are often collected in programs for families of school-age children.

- **Most programs collect anecdotal evidence of program impact through case studies and "success stories"** as a descriptive indicator of program impact as well as tangible reinforcement for staff and participants.

Ten of the seventeen programs studied have been adopted or transferred to multiple school districts. Factors involved in successful transfer include:

- **an administrative organization or agency** to provide technical assistance and staff training;

- **funding** for program adoption; and

- **well-developed curriculum materials.**

These issues in program evaluation and transferability are addressed more fully in the remainder of this chapter.

## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION APPROACHES

The family education programs in the study do evaluate student behaviors and parent process variables. However, the types of evaluation activities undertaken tend to be informal or formative in nature rather than impact evaluations. This priority reflects the programs' primary concern with program improvement. Particularly in the early years of a program, documenting the nature of program implementation and revising activities to improve service delivery are more germaine issues for program staff than investigating outcomes. In this section, we discuss the types of data collection measures and research designs used in the family education programs studied.

### Data Collection Measures

Overall, thirteen programs use parent questionnaires, making them the most common data collection instrument among the seventeen programs studied. Seven programs ask parents to rate program materials and activities or to indicate their satisfaction with program activities so that staff can improve the program and "perfect their craft." For example, Project Home Base routinely asks parents to rate the difficulty level of their home activity kits. In addition to rating program activities, programs also utilize parent questionnaires to obtain information about parents' behaviors and attitudes.

Eight programs use standardized tests to measure children's cognitive skills or school achievement. Such measures are consistent with the overarching goal of these family education programs--to enhance children's school success. Two programs that include adult education components also administer tests of adult basic skills.

Other measures of children's school-related skills also are collected. Programs for school-age children are likely to incorporate teacher ratings into an evaluation design. These questionnaires assess students' classroom behavior, attitudes towards school, work habits and self-esteem. Three programs for older children obtain attendance information and student grades from school records; two programs also utilize student questionnaires to obtain information about behaviors and attitudes. A small number of programs collect evaluation information via observations of group interactions. These tend to be programs that include preschool children or family activities in classroom settings.

Programs also collect anecdotal evidence of outcomes that reflect the varied program objectives and are the precursors or correlates of impacts on student achievement. These include changes in family dynamics, parental expectations, and parental involvement in schools. Some disadvantaged families in these programs face a number of life challenges in terms of survival (e.g., housing, food, health care) that impact their ability to address issues regarding their children's schooling. The first step to increasing involvement in education among particularly disadvantaged or disenfranchised families is to enable parents to feel comfortable enough to walk in the door of the school or to attend a group parent meeting. Finding that parents who did not come to their child's school at all are now attending parent meetings, volunteering in the school or attending parent-teacher conferences suggests that a program is having an impact on families, which might lead to long-term benefits for parents and children.

These "success stories" provide a particularly rich source of information on program outcomes that are difficult to measure, such as parents' self-esteem, perceptions of their children's abilities and their own responsibility in their children's education. This information can serve as an important and necessary component in a complex model of program impacts for family education programs. In addition, these stories provide reinforcement and encouragement to program staff that their efforts are making a difference in families' lives and in families' involvement with public schools.

## Evaluation Designs

Exhibit 8.1 summarizes the data collection measures and research designs employed by the seven in-depth sites. Six programs administer standardized tests of student achievement or school readiness in a pretest/posttest evaluation design and calculate student gains over the course of program participation. As in many Chapter 1 evaluations, a number of these programs calculate gains on NCE (normal curve equivalent) scores.

We found no family education program with a true experimental design in which families were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. However, five in-depth sites have undertaken quasi-experimental designs incorporating comparison groups. Three of these programs implemented multidimensional research designs where scores from student tests and parent interviews are compared over time and with those of nonparticipants.

Two programs are conducting case studies of individual families as they participate in and exit from program activities. These case studies include in-depth interviews with parents and staff.

## Exhibit 8.1
## Evaluation Activities Conducted by In-Depth Sites

| Program | Children | | Parents & Families | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Measures** | **Research Designs** | **Measures** | **Research Designs** |
| ECFE | Teacher Questionnaire | Posttest only, compared with other kindergarten children | Teacher Questionnaire | Posttest only, compared with other parents of kindergarten |
| | Independent observers | Posttest only, comparison group | Telephone survey | Posttest only |
| HIPPY/USA | Dropout rate, grade retention | Longitudinal study with comparison group | Parent Questionnaire | Comparison group |
| | | | Job Corps Reading Test | Pre/post, program only |
| Project Home Base | Kindergarten screening | Program children compared with older siblings | Parent Questionnaire | Pre/post, program only |
| | Preschool Inventory | Posttest only, comparison groups | | |
| | Alpern-Boll Developmental Profile | Pre/post gains, program only | | |
| Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project | Child Observation Record and Child Assessment Record (High/Scope) | Pre/post gains, program only | Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) | Pre/post gains, program only |
| | | | Parent Interview | Case studies |
| Project AHEAD | Teacher Questionnaire | Pre/post gains, program only | Teacher Questionnaire | Pre/post gains, program only |
| FSI | Iowa Test of Basic Skills | Pre/post gains, program only | Parent Questionnaire | Pre/post gains, program only |
| | | Pre/post gains, matched comparison groups | | |
| McAllen Parental Involvement Program | California Achievement Test | Pre/post gains, compared with other children in district and state | Parent Questionnaire | Posttest only, program only |

## CHALLENGES OF EVALUATION

Program staff are aware of the need for data on effectiveness and are knowledgeable about the issues involved in evaluating their programs. For example, the program director of Academia del Pueblo cautions that staff in family education programs should not "get so busy setting up programs that they ignore evaluation"--evaluation results are essential to secure funding. Staff in other programs indicate that they are striving for more rigorous evaluation data. For example, staff in ECFE continue to work on strategies to collect summative evaluation data to match their strong formative evaluation results. ECFE also is exploring ways to investigate which program strategies work best with particular populations.

The primary challenge affecting the quality of evaluations is financial. In general, family education programs do not have the resources to conduct ongoing summative evaluations. For most programs, limited resources are earmarked for direct service delivery rather than for evaluation. A few programs report that they have collected data on student outcomes, but do not have the resources to hire staff to analyze the results.

Programs that conduct formal evaluations do so for a specific purpose. For example, Project Home Base contracted with an independent evaluator to conduct a research study in order to qualify as a dissemination site in the National Diffusion Network. FSI has contracted with outside experts to conduct outcome evaluations to provide information to funding sources as well as to pursue its own research objectives. ECFE contracts with independent evaluators to prepare mandated reports to the legislature. Programs funded with Chapter 1 monies, such as the McAllen Parental Involvement Program, conduct evaluations of student outcomes as mandated by the law, but do not carry out evaluations of parent activities.

When limited funds are used for evaluations, programs focus on overall program benefits. Information is not collected about the types of activities, recruitment strategies or staff qualifications that are associated with greater gains. Moreover, looking across the program evaluations, it is not possible to discern patterns which suggest that certain types of activities or approaches are more effective overall or more successful with particular types of families. Discussions with program staff reveal hypotheses about the match between program approaches and parent characteristics, but, thus far, these hypotheses have not moved beyond practitioner knowledge into research evidence. Thus, we have some indication that these programs work, but virtually no information about what works best with different populations.

Because individual family education programs or school districts are unlikely to be able to marshall funds for more extensive and rigorous evaluations, the research community should be encouraged to get involved. Studies comparing different types of family education programs as well as more comprehensive investigations of individual programs are needed in order to move the field of family education ahead. Program staff are concerned with improving their own service delivery, but more information is needed for program improvement in the larger sense.

## TRANSFERABILITY OF PROGRAMS

An issue that often arises in discussions of exemplary or promising programs is whether the programs can work in sites other than where the program was developed. Although this was not a criterion for inclusion in the study, ten of the seventeen family education programs have been adopted by or transferred to multiple school districts. Factors that appear to facilitate program transferability include: technical assistance and training, well-developed curriculum materials, and funding for program adoption.

Three program models--HIPPY, Academia del Pueblo, and Kenan--are administered by national or international organizations that take an active role in helping to implement the program in multiple sites. HIPPY has national training sites in the United States through the NCJW Center for the Child in New York, in the Netherlands and in Chile in addition to the original program team from Israel; the program is operating in more than 30 sites in the United States. Academia del Pueblo was developed by the National Council of La Raza, an organization that works with community-based organizations to improve education for Hispanic families, and is being implemented in sites in Virginia, Arizona, Wisconsin, and California. The National Center for Family Literacy oversees the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project and provides technical assistance and staff training to districts interested in adopting the model. During the 1989-90 school year, 31 school districts have implemented the Kenan model, and another 37 districts are in the planning stages. In each of these cases, the national organizations have funds for training and technical assistance, and charge local districts nothing or minimal fees for these services.

Project Home Base was a Developer-Demonstration Project disseminated through the National Diffusion Network for three years. It has been adopted in 54 sites.

Three study sites are statewide family education programs. The ECFE program, begun in 1974 as a pilot program in six sites, is now implemented in 326 districts in Minnesota through funding formulas established by the state legislature. The

Syracuse Prekindergarten Program was developed locally, but now is funded through and a part of the network of the New York State Prekindergarten Program implemented in 114 districts throughout the state. The Maryland Activity Book and Toy Lending Program also started on a local level and was extended with state funds. Clearly, funding is a key factor in expanding programs.

FSI, TIPS and Family Math are, to one extent or another, curriculum packages that school districts purchase for local implementation. TIPS was developed to be easily implemented by school districts who contact the developers at Johns Hopkins University and pay minimal fees for program materials. Family Math and FSI courses also consist of simple curriculum materials that can be used in a variety of locations.

Thus, there is evidence to suggest that promising home-based and center-based programs as well as home curricula can be successfully implemented in other sites. In addition, the longevity of these programs not only attests to their success but also suggests that a program model that has been fine-tuned over a number of years of implementation facilitates program transfer. Programs that are active in developing models for dissemination are concerned about quality control--ensuring that the program features and philosophy are transferred as planned. In a number of the programs (e.g., HIPPY, Kenan, FSI, Family Math) staff associated with the developers or sponsors are involved in training and dissemination activities. Staff from the Kenan program and FSI courses also offer on-going technical assistance for districts implementing the program. In the opinion of school staff, this technical support is critical to successful implementation.

# CHAPTER 9

# CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The preceding chapters are intended to convey a sense of the energy, commitment and creativity in this set of promising family education programs, as well as to examine in detail program operations. This chapter presents some of the "implementation principles" that have emerged from studying these programs. The chapter also addresses questions about the future of family education: What has this study taught us about implementing family education programs? How can we sustain successful programs and continue to replicate their accomplishments? What are some of the critical challenges for future programs?

## IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

Across the programs we identified a number of common practices that are the basis for a rudimentary set of implementation principles. As discussed in Chapter 1, these principles are guidelines rather than prescriptions, since they are not (yet) empirically established. Nevertheless, the programs in this study offer valuable information about working with families, particularly low-income and minority families.

Here we present strategies that these successfully implemented family education programs are using in recruiting families, sustaining family involvement, staffing, and establishing collaborative relationships with public schools.

### Recruitment

1. **Use a variety of recruitment techniques, and use person-to-person methods to encourage hard-to-reach families to participate.** No one recruitment method is best for reaching all types of families, and these programs employ a variety of methods and media, including written materials, radio announcements and presentations to parent groups. Personal contacts, which most frequently come via "word-of-mouth" from current or former participants and from program staff, appear to be a crucial ingredient in effective recruitment. Personal contacts are especially important for parents who have had little positive interaction with schools, who are recent immigrants with no previous contacts with American schools, or whose cultural traditions do not encourage parent involvement in schooling.

2. **Effective recruitment entails careful attention to the kinds of information presented to families and to ensuring that the information is accessible to parents with varying levels of education.** Programs provide information for parents about opportunities for participation that does not require advanced literacy skills and is available in languages other than English.

3. **Recognize the ongoing nature of recruitment.** Programs that try to enroll hard-to-reach families approach recruitment as an ongoing rather than a one-time activity, and expend substantial resources on these efforts. Staff work hard to maintain the continued involvement of current participants as well as to recruit new families throughout the program year.

4. **Recognize that it takes time for a program to be accepted in the community.** Programs that forge new relationships between schools and families need time to "take hold" in their communities. Waiting lists are rare during a program's initial year or so of operation, and recruitment is a continuing challenge. As a program establishes its credentials with families, and program benefits are "publicized" through word-of-mouth, recruitment is easier and programs often have more interested families than they can serve.

## Sustaining Family Participation

5. **Offer multiple modes of participation** to support different aspects of parent development and accommodate the varied skill levels of parents, including group process and interpersonal skills, and literacy and language skills. Home visits confer one set of advantages in terms of establishing an intimate, helping relationship between the parent and a role model and providing an opportunity for one-to-one teaching and demonstration of ways parents can interact with their children. Home visits also require relatively few group social skills. Group parent sessions provide the possibility for parent-to-parent support, group membership and development of group process skills; however, group sessions may require more self-confident adults. Effective programs not only provide multiple modes of participation, they also provide support to help parents move from one type of participation to another.

6. **Emphasize direct benefits for parents.** Programs serve as a resource for parents' own needs, including education and employment. Program staff often spoke of building the self-esteem and confidence of parents as a necessary first step to helping children.

7. **Define objectives for parents in concrete and realistic terms, beginning with objectives that can be quickly and easily achieved.** These programs are realistic about the difficulties faced by families and adjust their goals accordingly. In order to motivate parents and to sustain staff and participant morale, programs often set family goals that are short-term and concrete, so that success can be experienced more easily.

8. **Individualize and adapt curriculum and methods to family characteristics,** by providing bilingual staff and materials for non-English speaking families; addressing cultural values that relate to parent involvement in schooling; and adapting curriculum methods and materials to the skill and interest levels of parents.

9. **Be responsive to families' multiple needs.** These programs demonstrate sensitivity to family circumstances that are barriers to pursuing the program's educational agenda. Programs working with multineed families offer support services in addition to parent education, either directly or through referrals and personal linkages with other public and private agencies.

10. **Create bonds among parents and with the program** to overcome the isolation, sense of powerlessness, and negative school experiences that often characterize disadvantaged families. Techniques include formalized commitment letters or certificates, tangible rewards for participation, ceremonies and rituals, parent support groups, and tangible program products.

11. **Create an environment for parents to develop parent-to-parent peer support.** Programs emphasize the power of parent-to-parent communication and teaching that takes place in parent groups. Open-ended discussions provide an opportunity for parents to develop personal bonds and social support, as well as to improve their own self-expression skills.

12. **Recognize the importance of providing ongoing reinforcement to parents for their participation.** Reinforcement helps maintain parents' morale and interest. Programs display high expectations that families will continue to participate; build in periodic reminders; reinforce parents in personal ways for their participation; and stress positive alternatives to parenting and personal behavior.

## Staffing

13. **Employ staff who are committed to the program goals and philosophy and who effectively communicate their respect and caring for the parents and children whom the program is serving.** These programs underscore the relationship between successful

implementation and staff skills and attitudes. The caring and involvement of the program staff are striking.

14. **Recognize the value of using community members as program staff.** Repeatedly, programs emphasize by example and in words the power of using community members as program staff--because of their understanding of the families and the community, the example they provide to parents, and the mutually respectful and trusting relationships they establish with families.

15. **Make time for ongoing, frequent staff meetings.** Staff stress the value of continual communication, both for training and for support. Frequent staff meetings encourage staff development, help staff collaborate on solving problems they are facing in working with families, and provide an opportunity for staff support and team building.

## Relationships with Schools

16. **Recognize that schools have to work at establishing positive relationships with families.** Programs are dealing with families who may feel uncomfortable, unwelcome and unfamiliar in the schools and who may feel that in the past school staff have not treated them respectfully. Family education programs linked to the schools must overcome these barriers by helping parents establish new connections and by helping school staff interact differently with families.

17. **Build support for the program from district and school administrators.** The message from administrators that family education and parental involvement are valued and central to good schools facilitates the integration of program activities into the wider district community and also can marshall additional resources for program activities. Support within the district not only helps maintain current programs but also may be a necessary foundation for expanding family education beyond the early grades.

18. **Consider the location of both the administrative offices and program activities to facilitate district integration and support.** Placing program offices and sites in close physical proximity to other district programs will encourage collaboration among district and program staff. In addition, hiring program staff who have prior experience with the district will build on personal connections and increase support for program activities.

## FUTURE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR FAMILY EDUCATION

What are some of future issues and challenges for family education? They include:

- supporting and expanding quality programs;
- sustaining short-term program benefits;
- developing stable funding both for program operations and for summative evaluation;
- allocating limited resources;
- developing training methods for paraprofessional staff;
- training school staff to work more closely and productively with families;
- integrating family education programs with the existing K-12 curriculum in schools; and
- adapting to changing demographic trends.

Each of these issues is discussed below.

### Supporting Family Education Programs

The programs selected for this study have been operating for at least two years, and some have been in existence for five or more years. Their ability to continue serving families is a testament to the programs and their staff. Their longevity also has given programs the opportunity to analyze and modify their own operations. Discussions with program directors suggest that over time these programs have evolved into different and often improved versions, better able to serve the target families. The programs have reached a point in their development where they are proud of their accomplishments and confident that they are making a difference in families' lives.

Sustaining these family education programs is a continuing challenge. Obtaining stable and adequate funding is a critical component of successful implementation, yet funding remains a constant concern. To survive, programs have to be adept and inventive in combining funding, and all of these programs draw on more than one funding source. In addition, all of these programs depend wholly or in part on school district monies from state or federal sources, such as Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. This funding is not guaranteed, and other established programs as well as new initiatives compete for the same money. More than one program director articulated both the need for more permanent funding status and the wish that parent education could become a "line item" in school district budgets. Although none of the programs in the study was in immediate danger of losing funding, long-range support was a shared concern.

Funding will be necessary not only to support current program operations but also to expand the population of families served. Adequate support is needed so that projects can address unmet needs. Typically, in the projects visited, only a small proportion of the eligible disadvantaged population is being served, and in some communities no other family education programs operate. With an increasing number of children growing up in poverty, the demand for family education programs is bound to increase.

### Sustaining Long-term Effects of Family Education

Sustaining program effects is another issue to be considered. Most programs work with families of young children and are able to effect some positive short-term changes for the children. Whether the changes that these programs promote in target families will be sustained in the absence of continued program intervention remains to be seen. If not, then school districts and policymakers should investigate ways to support family education programs throughout children's school careers.

### Resources for Research and Evaluation

The availability of resources to conduct rigorous summative evaluations is another concern. Since programs do not have adequate resources to support in-depth, experimentally sound evaluations of program effects, the involvement of the larger educational research community in evaluating family education programs is essential. Research is needed to examine the differential impact of program components and investigate the match between service delivery models and family characteristics and needs. It seems likely that this research will have to be funded or conducted by groups from outside of the programs.

### Allocation of Resources within Projects

Among these programs, decisions about which families to target for services were made both during program development and after implementation began. In the universal programs, services are provided to all families in the district or catchment area. Although some efforts are made to reach out to needier families, funding is not adequate to serve large numbers of such families. In some instances, special programs for the multiproblem families were terminated because of the strain on program resources. Programs that serve the more dysfunctional families typically can serve a smaller total number of families, and such programs have had to face the difficulties of working with families with severe problems such as drug abuse and alcoholism. As the number of dysfunctional families increases, family education programs will be challenged to try to serve more of these families.

### Training Needs

One issue for the future is developing training and support strategies for paraprofessional staff. Based on these programs, paraprofessional and community staff will play an important role in the future of family education. Programs need to determine how best to support and train these staff in order to help them deal with the difficult issues that arise among families with multiple needs.

Providing training for school staff also is an issue for family education programs linked to schools. Despite the fact that program objectives focus primarily on changing families, most also are aware that schools and school staff must become more sensitive and responsive to disadvantaged and minority families.

### Closer Integration with the School Curriculum

A more complete integration of family education programs with the content and curriculum of the K-12 program is a continuing issue. Administrative linkages among the programs visited were often well established, including district and school building leadership and support. For preschool programs, a key issue continues to be the transition of children to kindergarten. For programs serving school-age children, both instructional linkages and connections between parents and school personnel need to be strengthened.

### Adapting to Changing Demographic Trends

Changing demographic trends in the country are likely to affect the implementation of family education programs. First, programs will need to go farther in developing methods and training staff to work with multicultural, multilingual communities. Development of a body of knowledge about effective practices with multicultural populations is crucial, as family education programs are faced with an increasingly heterogeneous mix of families. Programs must learn how individuals from different cultural, language and racial groups vary in their needs and goals, and in the kinds of approaches that are most effective. In addition, as programs strive to hire staff who reflect the multicultural nature of the families being served, programs will have to learn how to deal with cultural differences among staff themselves. Based on this study, issues of culture and race loom large as programs look ahead to the changing demographics of families.

Second, working with families in the future will require programs to develop creative ways of establishing contact with parents who are not home most of the time, as more women work, especially women with younger children. In addition, welfare reform initiatives will require more poor mothers with young children to enter the work force. Among the programs visited, most attracted nonworking mothers, and only a few sought to accommodate the increased time demands of work or to schedule evening and weekend parent sessions.

The programs in this study are strong examples of family education aimed at enhancing children's learning. They were selected on the basis of evidence of their impact on children or families, approaches to working with families, longevity, and reputations in the field. These programs have the enthusiastic support of parents, educators, school districts, and policymakers. What this study of seventeen promising programs shows is that this enthusiasm is founded in reality--the programs are well conceived, well implemented, and sensitively delivered. While they are only a subset of the array of family education programs currently being implemented, including other strong models, they offer examples of how family education can be provided to diverse populations in a variety of settings. Examination of their implementation has provided rich information on principles of practice that are shared by successful programs. As the interest in family education, family involvement, and family-school cooperation grows, this information can provide a foundation for developing new family education initiatives.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## *DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY METHODOLOGY*

The goals of this study were to define, identify and describe promising family education programs designed to help parents of disadvantaged children assist more effectively with their children's development and learning. To meet these objectives, the study first designated a set of programs that were promising models. Second, the study examined the operation of these programs in detail.

### Identification of Promising Programs

A multistage process was used to identify promising family education programs that serve disadvantaged families. As the first step, criteria were defined for inclusion in the study. To be selected, programs had to:

- have as the primary goal of the program the enhancement of children's school success and achievement through family education;
- focus on families of children between the ages of 3 and 8 years;
- target children from economically disadvantaged homes or who are otherwise at risk for school failure; and
- be sponsored by or linked to the public schools.

A national search for programs that met these criteria was undertaken. A variety of strategies were employed to identify potentially promising programs.

First, nominations of promising family education programs were solicited from organizations and individuals active in the field of family education. Each nominator received a letter explaining the study and setting out the structural parameters and the set of program challenges of interest to this study. Nominators were asked to send in the names of any programs considered promising. Programs suggested by the nominators were then contacted for further information.

Exhibit A-1 lists the organizations and individuals contacted for program nominations. A number of these organizations have recently conducted their own investigations of early childhood and family involvement programs and have published reports that include descriptions of family education programs. These publications proved to be a rich source of program nominations. The most pertinent reports include the following:

- The Education Commission of the States: Drawing in the Family--Family Involvement in the Schools (1988)
- The Family Resource Coalition: Programs that Strengthen Families (1988)
- National Conference of State Legislatures: "Selected Legislative Innovations in State Education Policy," State Legislative Report, Vol. 13, No. 37, 1988

Exhibit A-1

## ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED FOR NOMINATIONS

- American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, VA
- American Educational Research Association, Special Interest Group on Family Education
- American Federation of Teachers, Washington, DC
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA
- California Coalition of Parent/Community Involvement in Education, Palo Alto, CA
- Center on the Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD
- Center for the Study of Parent Involvement, Oakland, CA
- Council of Great City Schools, Washington, DC
- Educational Commission of the States, Denver, CO
- Family Resource Coalition, Chicago, IL
- National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, DC
- National Association of Elementary School Principals, Alexandria, VA
- National Association of State Boards of Education, Alexandria, VA
- National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, Alexandria, VA
- National Committee for Citizens in Education, Columbia, MD
- National Conference of State Legislatures, Denver, CO
- National Parents and Teachers Association, Chicago, IL
- Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC
- Phi Delta Kappa, Center for Dissemination of Innovative Programs, Bloomington, IN
- Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, TX

* * * * *

- Ann Mitchell, Bank Street College of Education (study of early education linked to public schools)
- Barbara Day, University of North Carolina (ASCD consultant)
- Pat Olmstead, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
- Carol Vukelick, University of Delaware, College of Education (home reading program)
- Janet Chrispeels, San Diego County Office of Education
- Ruth Nickse, Boston University (literacy program)

- National School Boards Association: First Teachers: Parental Involvement in the Public Schools (1988)
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Public School Early Childhood Programs (1988)
- Bank Street College of Education: The Public School Early Childhood Study Case Studies (1988).

Second, a search of the child development and educational literature was undertaken to identify programs that might be promising. This included review of proceedings or program listings from the annual meetings of the major national professional groups, for program identifications. All programs identified by this strategy were also contacted for further information.

Third, because this study is particularly interested in programs linked with public schools, we contacted by telephone persons in state departments of education (including community education and adult education) and departments of community mental health to ask about state and local education agency programs relevant to the study. A recent state survey by the Council of Chief State School Officers identified which states were active in family education. Based on their survey summary, we selected twenty-three states to call for further information.

In states that are funding some kind of statewide family education program, we obtained a description of the program and names of sites that state staff considered to be implementing the state program in particularly effective or interesting ways. In states that have not funded statewide programs, we asked state contacts to nominate school districts that are involved in promising activities in family education. In addition, some state departments of education have publications identifying parent involvement/family education activities in their school districts and schools.

An announcement about the study was listed in newsletters for the American Association of School Administrators and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The listing requested school districts or schools that felt their family education activities were exemplary to contact the contractor.

Fourth, for federal programs with parent involvement components, such as Follow Through, Head Start and Chapter 1, we contacted program staff to solicit nominations of promising sites.

These strategies for soliciting nominations resulted in the identification of 150 programs for consideration. All programs nominated were screened in terms of the four major criteria, which resulted in the reduction of the pool of programs to 90. This pool was narrowed to 40 programs that were identified as successful and innovative. "Successful" programs were defined initially in terms of evidence of program impact. Although most programs had not been able to devote substantial resources to formal summative evaluation, all had informal evidence of effects and had developed strong, positive reputations in the community and in the field. Programs also had sustained operation for more than two years and were implemented in multiple sites. "Innovative" programs were defined in terms of characteristics of the program approach: intensity of contact with parents, number or types of methods used, and creative staffing arrangements.

In order to select the 6-8 sites for in-depth study and additional sites for telephone interviews, the programs were categorized in terms of their approach and methods. The members of the study advisory panel were then consulted. Panel members were given brief program descriptions and categorization and then asked for recommendations, accompanied by identification of the salient program features in their selections.

Two groups of programs were identified on the basis of this review process. First, seven programs were selected for the **in-depth case studies.** These programs meet the study's criteria for serving disadvantaged families with children 3 to 8 years of age, are linked to or sponsored by a school district, and focus on improving children's achievement. In addition, each program has a well-articulated model or approach and works intensively with families. The seven programs also are geographically diverse.

A second set of ten programs was selected for **telephone interviews.** These programs meet the study criteria but either do not have evidence of effectiveness, or are similar to program models selected for the case studies but less comprehensive or widely implemented.

### Examining Program Operation and Effectiveness

**Case Study Visits.** In order to gather information about the ways in which these programs are working with disadvantaged children and their families, site visits of the seven programs were conducted. Each program was visited by a two-person team for three days. Site visits were completed between November 1989 and March 1990.

During the visit, the program operation was examined in detail. The topics covered in the interviews are listed in Exhibit A-2. In addition to operational data, interviews focused on a number of "challenges" that had been identified by the study advisory panel as critical issues facing today's family education programs.

Information was collected through interviews with the following types of individuals at each program:

- program director and other administrative staff;
- personnel at sponsoring/developing agency or organization;
- service delivery staff (teachers, home visitors, etc.);
- school district staff;
- school building staff;
- members of any program advisory group(s); and
- parents participating in the program.

The interviews for a particular program were individualized in two ways. First, there was a somewhat different set of respondents to be interviewed in each program, depending on the program's administrative and organizational structure. Second, the specific research topics addressed in the interviews were based on the individual's relationship to the program and the program components. Although all of the interviews followed the same general set of topics (shown in Exhibit A-2), topics were identified for which a respondent was the "key" or primary informant, and these were a major focus of the interview. Other topics were covered in less detail.

In addition to interviews, program information was obtained by observing program activities and reviewing curriculum materials and other written documents, including evaluation reports and documentation of program activities.

**Telephone Interviews.** For the programs selected for telephone interviews, descriptive information was collected from the program director at each site. The interviews followed the same list of topics as was addressed in the in-depth case studies, although topics were not explored in the same detail. Also, observation of program activities was not possible in these sites, so the analysis of curriculum and teaching methods was more limited. Telephone interviews were conducted during March and April of 1990.

## Analysis of Program Information

Based on the information collected during the site visits, individual case studies were prepared for each of the seven in-depth sites. Briefer individual program descriptions were prepared for each of the telephone sites. A cross-site analysis of all seventeen program sites was undertaken to identify program responses to key challenges in implementing high-quality family education programs. Each in-depth site received the draft final report for review, as did the study advisory panel.

## Exhibit A-2
## Topics For Case Study Site Visits

### I. Program Descriptions

A. Program Development
B. Program Goals
C. Targeted Population
D. Program Structure/Administration
E. Program Site/Facilities
F. Program Budget
G. Characteristics of School District/Community Served
H. Characteristics of Participants
I. Outreach
J. Overview of Program Services: Types and Frequency
K. Content/Delivery of Services to Parents
L. Content/Delivery of Services to Children
M. Program Participation
N. Parent Input
O. Staff
P. Linkage to schools
Q. Program Evaluation
R. Conclusions/Lessons

### II. Challenges in Family Education

A. Recruitment of Hard-to-Reach Families
B. Maintaining Parent Participation
C. Sensitivity/Adaptation to Families
  - Cultural differences
  - Needs of individual families
D. Parent-Staff Relationships
  - Collaboration
  - Mutuality
E. Use of Community and Paraprofessional Staff
F. Staff Retention, Training and Support
G. Collaboration with Public Schools
H. Impacts on Families

# APPENDIX B

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

### Case Study Sites

- ECFE Program
- HIPPY/Miami
- Project Home Base
- Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project
- Project AHEAD
- Family Study Institute
- McAllen Parental Involvement Program

### Telephone Interview Sites

- Project FIEL
- PREP
- Prestame Una Comadre
- Syracuse Prekindergarten Program
- Academia del Pueblo
- Kuban Parent Involvement Program
- Family Math
- Parents in Touch
- TIPS-Math Book
- The Activity Book and Toy Lending (ABT) Program

## EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION
### Minnesota Department of Education

**"Because Parenthood is a learned experience."**
**–Program motto**

**Program Context:**

ECFE is a state-funded, center-based program designed for families with children from birth to kindergarten. It currently operates in more than 300 Minnesota school districts that collectively include 96% of the birth to four-year-old population. The program is available to all families, with the goal of serving hard-to-reach families in proportion to their representation in the community. This study concentrated on program offerings for disadvantaged families living in Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Robbinsdale, and Lake Forrest.

ECFE is located in a variety of settings from housing projects, low-income apartments and store fronts to former elementary schools. On average, parents and their children spend two hours a week in the center. All classes include parent-child interaction time, parent discussion time, and children's activities. Some classes may be age-specific or group specific (such as teen parents, black parents, hearing and nonhearing Hmong families).

According to the latest statewide information (covering July 1988 through December 1989), parent and child classes were attended by 45,000 parents, 46,000 children, and 8,000 siblings. Special events were attended by 76,000 parents, 64,000 children, and 9,000 older siblings. Home visits were conducted with 1,960 parents, 2,150 children and 630 siblings.

**Program Activities:**

Major activities of the program for the 1989-90 academic year include the following:

*Parent/Child Centers*

On average, parents and their children spend two hours per week in classes located at neighborhood centers. All classes include 15-45 minutes of parent-child interaction time (often split between the beginning and end of the class); parent discussion time; and children's activities. During parent-child interaction time, educators model appropriate behavior. Parent time is parent-to-parent discussion, facilitated by the parent educator. It also includes discussion of children's behavior either by the early childhood educator or through videotapes focusing on developmentally appropriate behaviors. Children's activities, overseen by a certified early childhood educator, include discovery, playing cooperatively, learning to separate from parents, and a range of cognitive and motor development activities. Some classes may be age specific (such as only four-year-olds).

*Parent Only Groups*

Classes are occasionally offered without the child activities component. Such classes are usually one or two hours long and rarely are more than one or two sessions. Topics might include infant and child emergencies, time management, or balancing work and family.

*Special Topic Groups*

Center activities may focus on particular groups, such as teen parents, black parents, hearing and nonhearing Hmong families, American Indian parents, fathers, single parents, and "breaking the cycle of addiction."

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| *Parent and Children's Lending Libraries* | Most early childhood centers have toy and book lending libraries, as well as clothes exchanges. |
| *Special Events* | Diverse events, varying from community to community, can include open houses, fall frolic, Halloween parties, field trips to the zoo, toy-making workshops, and the celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. |
| *Home Visits* | Home visits are usually conducted as a recruitment device but are also used as the program delivery system for parents unable to attend a center. |
| **Length of Participation:** | Families are expected to make a two-year commitment. |
| Program Staff: | Each community has an ECFE coordinator working for the school district who oversees center-based parent educators and early childhood educators, the vast majority of whom work part-time. All parent educators and early childhood educators must be certified teachers and fully licensed. Licensure requires about 18-21 hours of course work beyond the B.A. degree. All sites visited also have parent and early childhood aides, who come from the community and match clients in race, ethnicity, and language. |
| Program Development: | ECFE started as a state-funded pilot program in 1974 and operated through the Council on Quality Education. Ten years later, state funding shifted from grants to per capita aid, supplemented with local levies; 1986 was the first year under a statewide funding formula. The program focuses on enhancing parents' competence in providing an environment for children to learn, with emphasis on encouraging discovery in children, providing choices for children, and stressing developmentally appropriate experiences. |
| Program Goals: | The goals are to:<br>• support parents in their efforts in raising children;<br>• offer child development information and alternative parenting techniques;<br>• help create effective communication between parents and their children;<br>• supplement the discovery and learning experiences of children; and<br>• promote positive parental attitudes throughout their child's school years. |
| Funding Sources: | Major funding sources are local and state funds, with additional funding through parent fees, foundations, and civic organizations. Parents are not precluded from attending because of inability to pay. |
| Elements in Program Effectiveness: | Model legislation provides a formula for funding the program statewide.<br>There is flexibility for local programs with an overall strong program direction.<br>Funding is based on universal access, so that the passage of a local levy was politically easier than for funding targeted on special populations. |

Funds designated only for ECFE cannot be diverted for other purposes.

ECFE has licensed teachers who are able to work with small groups, make home visits, and establish trust and credibility in other circles.

Fees are optional and waived if necessary.

Required advisory councils serve as the "eyes and ears" for the program and are empowering outlets for parents.

Emphasis is placed on coordination with other agencies.

State and local staff have the commitment and experience to serve hard-to-reach families in proportion to their representation in the community.

**Evaluation Activities:** Based upon a 1986 report to the legislature, Evaluation Study of Early Childhood Family Education:

*Effects on Parents*

Fall and spring case studies of ten families (using interviews, observations, videotaping, and surveys) found consistent changes in parental self-concept, parental discipline and control, parental awareness of the complexity of child development, and parental guidance of child behavior. Little change was observed in parental nurturance and responsiveness, parental involvement in child care, and family support systems (1980-81).

Observations of parents' and children's behavior in two program sites did not reveal significant differences between ECFE and non-ECFE families, although surveys of ECFE parents show very favorable impact for the program. Parents said they were better informed as parents, more aware that other parents have many of the same problems, and have a better understanding of the similarities and differences among children. Virtually all ECFE participants said that they are more aware of different ways to raise children, better understand their child's behavior, and feel better about their skills as a parent (1980).

*Effects on Children*

Kindergarten teachers of ECFE and non-ECFE children surveyed in May 1979 in 49 schools reported that:

ECFE children had more positive attitudes toward school (90% of the teachers agreed); better all-around preparation for school (92%); better preparation in prekindergarten basic skills (87%); more confidence (92%); more social skills for interacting with other students (90%); better relationships with their parents (86%); fewer behavior problems (77%); and greater emotional maturity (79%).

*Evaluation Reports*

Minnesota Department of Education (March 1986). Evaluation Study of Early Childhood Family Education: Report to the Legislature. Minneapolis: Early Childhood Family Education, Minnesota Department of Education.

# HOME INSTRUCTION PROGRAM FOR PRESCHOOL YOUNGSTERS (HIPPY)
## DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
## Miami, Florida

> **"I'm a HIPPY golden star,**
> **with your help I will go far."**
> **–Song recited by HIPPY child**

**Program Context:**

HIPPY/Miami is operated by the Dade County Public Schools, the fourth largest school district in the country with more than 268,000 students in K-12. Enrollment has grown by almost 10,000 students a year for the past six years. As of the 1989-90 school year, 46% of the students are Hispanic, 33% are black, and 20% are white.

Since the program began in 1985, HIPPY/Miami has served approximately 275 families. During the 1989-90 school year, 125 families participated in the program. Approximately 60% of the adults have not completed high school. Seventy percent of the participating families are black, 20% are Hispanic, and 10% are Haitian. Home languages include English, Spanish, and Creole; in most families, at least one adult speaks some English.

The program is developed for children who are four and five years old. Any family who resides in the catchment area of the five elementary schools linked to the HIPPY program is eligible to participate. The schools are all in low-income areas within Miami, and the program is targeted toward disadvantaged families. Other priority characteristics include parents who are undereducated and children who are not attending a preschool program.

**Program Activities:**

HIPPY program activities alternate between home visits in participants' homes and parent group meetings at neighborhood elementary schools.

*Home Visits*

The core HIPPY program consists of home visits every other week in which paraprofessionals, called "Parent Partners," model activities that parents will work on at home with their children for a minimum of fifteen minutes a day. The activities follow a set of sequenced curriculum materials.

*Group Meetings*

Two-hour group meetings at a neighborhood elementary school are held on alternating weeks with home visits. During these sessions, Parent Partners present the home lessons for the following week. The agenda also includes time for parents to share information and talk with each other, and for staff to provide updates on program activities, information about continuing education programs and job training opportunities.

*Special Events*

Twice a year HIPPY sponsors a daylong jamboree held at different community locations that brings families together to learn about educational opportunities and social services, as well as to share food and games.

*Social Services*

Social services and health care referrals are made by staff as needed. Individual counseling is available on an informal basis by professional staff in the program and on a more formal basis by referral to local community agencies.

**Program Staff:**

There are five full-time paraprofessional Parent Partners who have primary responsibility for recruiting families, conducting home visits, and leading group meetings. Four of the Parent Partners have been parents in the HIPPY program.

HIPPY/Miami has a full-time coordinator who directly supervises the Parent Partners; serves as liaison with school building staff, school district staff and community organizations; and develops and implements staff training.

**Program Development:**

HIPPY began in 1969 in Israel as a project of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). Dr. Avima Lombard at the Research Institute for Innovative Education at Hebrew University in Jerusalem designed the HIPPY pilot program as a home-based intervention for educationally disadvantaged mothers and their preschool children. In 1975, the pilot program was adopted by Israel's Ministry of Education and Culture as part of the national education welfare program.

The first HIPPY program in the United States began in 1984 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Today, there are 30 HIPPY programs operating in eleven states.

HIPPY in Dade County started through the efforts of a Miami resident active on the NCJW national board, who felt that the HIPPY program could have a positive impact on families in Miami.

**Program Goals:**

HIPPY in Miami has the following written statement of goals:

- encourage parents to become involved in the education of their children;
- establish consistency in teaching children at home;
- improve communication skills between parents and children;
- offer ongoing motivational strategies to enhance educational performance; and
- encourage parents to enroll in continuing education programs.

**Funding Sources:**

Dade County Public Schools fund HIPPY through a combination of federal Chapter 2 funds and district monies. The local chapter of the NCJW provides funds for extras to the program, such as the promotion ceremony and travel to Israel for staff training. Local businesses and organizations donate money as well as in-kind contributions of materials.

**Elements in Program Effectiveness:**

A key factor in the success of this program is the use of paraprofessional staff who are from the community and have participated in HIPPY with their own children. The staff in HIPPY/Miami relate easily with families and reflect the multicultural diversity of participating parents.

The program shows concern for parents' own needs as adults in terms of education and employment.

A well-defined curriculum brings books and educational materials into low-income homes and focuses on school-related concepts and skills.

The staff shows flexibility in working with any interested adult family member, meeting parents at a variety of locations and times, and adapting teaching strategies to the skill levels of individual parents.

**Evaluation Activities**: *Effects on Children in HIPPY/Israel*

The original group of 140 HIPPY participants in Israel has been followed up through twelfth grade. Results indicate that these children were more likely to stay in school and less likely to be retained in grade than comparison children. HIPPY participants also showed more positive academic achievement than a group of comparison children.

*Effects on Parents in HIPPY/Israel*

In a study of parent outcomes, HIPPY parents were found to be more interested in their children's education, more involved in educational activities with their children, and more likely to enroll in educational programs for themselves than parents in the comparison group.

*Effects on Parents in HIPPY/USA*

HIPPY/USA has begun evaluation studies in sites across the country. In a study examining the effects of HIPPY on parents' literacy skills, parents' reading level rose significantly after program participation--from a pretest grade level of 5.35 to a level of 6.11 nine months later.

*Evaluation Reports*

NCJW Center for the Child (September 1989). HIPPY and Literacy. New York: Author.

NCJW Center for the Child (No date). HIPPY: The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters. An overview. New York.

# PROJECT HOME BASE
## Yakima School District, Washington

**"Helping parents
teach their own."
–Program motto**

**Program Context:**

Project Home Base is an early childhood, preschool program designed for disadvantaged families in the Yakima School District whose children have developmental delays. Most participating families live in Chapter 1 attendance areas or meet the eligibility requirements of Head Start. About 30% of the participating children qualify for special education.

Yakima is the agricultural hub for semiarid central Washington. About two-thirds of Yakima's 50,000 inhabitants are white and one-fourth are Hispanic, mostly settled migrant farm workers. About one-half of all five-year-old children are at least one year behind developmental norms, and about 15% of births are drug-abuse related.

In 1988-89, the program served 360 families and 496 children. In 1989-90, the program served 344 families and 470 children.

Home Base served as a Demonstrator-Developer site in the National Diffusion Network. In addition to Yakima, there are 54 adoptions of Home Base nationwide.

**Program Activities:**

The central feature is a weekly home teaching visit with the parent and child by the parent educator. Each visit lasts 45 minutes to one hour. The goal is to enhance the parent's teaching and parenting skills, while developing the child's intellectual skills and encouraging language and perceptual/motor growth. Home visits are supplemented by special events and occasional workshops.

*Home Visits*

Components of the home visit are:

- review of the parent/child interactions with last week's task;
- discussion of "special time," the time parents spend with their children that is intended for pleasure;
- presentation and modeling of a weekly task, which focuses on language, fine and gross motor coordination, matching colors, etc. The task is to be done in conjunction with a Magic Message (Desirable Teaching Behavior) (see below);
- discussion of Magic Messages (Desirable Teaching Behaviors). Examples include: explain what is going to happen before you start; give time to think about an activity--wait time; let children know when their behavior or answers are wrong, but do it in a loving way. In

one observation, the task of the week was "color bugs" (matching an assortment of items of the same color with colored plastic bugs) and the teaching behavior was "wait time." The parent is encouraged to practice the behavior during the week, while working on the weekly task and in other interactions with the child;

- modeling of finger play or verse for parent to repeat with the child during the week; and
- selection of book (one lent and returned each week), review of an article on parenting/child development (usually one or two pages on a topic requested by the parent or seen as important by the parent educator), reminder of upcoming parent events, and sharing information about community services.

*Workshops*

Regularly scheduled large group parent meetings are offered through the district's Early Childhood Center on topics such as building self-esteem and drug prevention.

*Special Events*

Special events include free children's plays at the high school, West Valley Farm Days, a Christmas party at the museum, a festival at the Mall, and an end-of-year picnic. Transportation is provided.

**Program Staff:**

Home Base is staffed by 18 parent educators. Three have teacher certification, although it is not required. Two are Hispanic and bilingual. They report to a staff coordinator who reports to the Early Childhood Center director.

**Program Development:**

School district support for parent education began in 1965 with Head Start. Yakima implemented the National Follow Through Parent Education model during 1968-81, with a parent educator working as a classroom assistant and teaching parents in their homes. The program for kindergarten through third grade adapted the University of Florida's Infant and Parent Education model developed by Ira Gordon. Home Base for birth to five-year-olds originated in 1971 with federal Title III funding, using the similar teacher-to-parent home visit model.

Home visit teaching-to-parent design remains the core of program, with minor changes brought about by shifts in funding, such as working with special education children, and classroom assisting as well as home visits in a two session per week Head Start type program.

Home Base was also a National Developer-Demonstration Project through the National Diffusion Network (ESEA Title III).

**Program Goals:**

Specific program goals include:

- support and enhance the parent's teaching behavior, to influence the child's growth and learning;
- reduce the likelihood of developmental delays for high-risk children upon entering kindergarten;
- remediate developmental deficiencies; and
- involve parents directly in the education of their young children.

**Length of Participation:** Families typically stay in the program for two years.

**Funding Sources:** The single largest funding source is the state, followed closely by federal funds through Chapter 1, and local levies.

**Elements in Program Effectiveness:** Staff qualifications and commitment to the program's philosophy are key elements.

There is strong, ongoing support for staff, including consistent staff inservice, team building, group exercises, and reconvening staff each afternoon. Staff development focuses on self-esteem among staff, so that staff who have challenging caseloads can still feel successful as parent educators.

Home Base enjoys district support and commitment, including strong superintendent and School Board support. The program has funding support through two-year local levies, as well as a bond for a new Early Childhood Center facility.

Yakima has an integrated social service agency system for early childhood. In a city of 50,000, most professionals in the system know each other and work together on projects.

The Early Childhood Center has universal eligibility. While Home Base focuses on disadvantaged families, the Early Childhood Center is for all families and children. The center's support base comes from the Backyard Center Program, a primarily middle-class program that relies on parent volunteers to manage its operation. It is quite successful; among its alumnae and supporters are two current members of the school board.

**Evaluation Activities:** 1980-81 was the last formal evaluation. Since then, all evaluation has been locally developed.

*Improved Child Readiness* Based on kindergarten entrance scores, siblings of previously delayed youngsters are doing better than their siblings after having participated in Home Base.

Data from 1972-73 and 1973-74 on the Preschool Inventory show that Home Base students performed at the 89th percentile, while comparison groups performed at the 57th and 54th percentiles, respectively.

A modified Alpern-Boll Developmental Profile administered annually found program children made a 9.8-month gain in academic skills and a 10-month gain in communication skills over 7 months. No one has analyzed data or conducted other evaluations since 1980-81.

The program maintains detailed logs on parent contacts and administers the Alpern-Boll Developmental Profile annually. Budget shortfalls have precluded analysis of these data.

*Evaluation Reports* Project Home Base (No date). Research Summary 1971-75. Yakima, WA: Yakima Public Schools.

# KENAN TRUST FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT
## Jefferson County Public Schools
## Louisville, Kentucky

**"You have done such a wonderful thing**
**You have given me hope and courage to dream**
**My children see this and they believe**
**That they can also achieve."**
**--Parent**
**From "A Place to Start: The Kenan**
**Trust Family Literacy Project"**

Program Context:

In Louisville, the Kenan program takes place in three elementary schools within the Jefferson County School District which has more than 93,000 students. The Kenan program is the only one in the district that offers early childhood education free of charge to parents.

The Kenan program has two primary eligibility criteria: parents without a high school diploma or a GED and children who are 3 or 4 years old. Most parents are unemployed high school dropouts who are on public assistance. Their reading levels range from third grade to twelfth grade. Participants include black and white families. English is the primary language of all participants.

The maximum number of children participating in a site is fifteen, in order to comply with regulations for staff/child ratios. Current enrollment varies from ten to fifteen across sites.

Program Activities:

The Kenan model is a full-day, school-based program that parents and children attend together three days a week. Parents and children begin the day by riding the school bus and eating breakfast in the school cafeteria.

*Early Childhood Education*

For three hours in the morning, the children attend a cognitively oriented preschool program based on the High/Scope model.

*Adult Education*

While the children are in the early childhood class, their parents receive instruction in adult basic education and literacy. Most parents are working toward a GED certificate.

*Parents and Children Together (PACT)*

For at least 45 minutes per day, the parents and children share time in the early childhood classroom, where they work on activities together. The adult education and early childhood teachers are present to facilitate interaction and learning.

*Parent Time (PT)*

While the children nap, the parents meet as a group, with the early childhood teacher as a facilitator, to discuss issues such as parenting, child development, home activities, family issues, or personal care.

*Support Services*

In addition to these basic components, the program offers Human Resources Development that focuses on career exploration and employability skills. Opportunities also exist for parents to volunteer in the schools. The program refers families for counseling, and health and social services, as needed.

**Program Development:**

The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project is an adaptation of the PACE (Parent and Child Education) Program developed by the Kentucky Department of Education.

In January 1988, the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, provided a grant to establish the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project in Kentucky. In March of that year, two Kenan Family Literacy programs began in Louisville. In the fall of 1988, the program was expanded to include three sites in Louisville and four sites in North Carolina.

In 1989, the Kenan Charitable Trust provided additional funding to expand the Literacy Project and start the National Center for Family Literacy to oversee the Kenan Family Literacy programs and provide training and technical assistance about the Kenan model. In addition to the seven model programs in Kentucky and North Carolina, 24 school districts have implemented the Kenan model during the 1989-90 school year.

**Program Goals:**

The overarching goal of the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Program is to break the intergenerational cycle of undereducation and poverty. Specific goals include:

- raise parents' education level through instruction in basic skills;
- help parents gain the skills and knowledge they need to become employed or pursue further training;
- increase the developmental skills of preschool children to better prepare them for academic success in school;
- improve parent skills and parent-child relationships; and
- increase the influence of literacy in the home.

**Funding Sources:**

In Louisville, the primary source of program funds are grants from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust directly to the Jefferson County Public Schools. All salaries, supplies, and materials come through school district channels and are paid by the Kenan grant. The district contributes in-kind contributions such as school building space and utilities. In addition, the program receives federal funds from the Adult Education Act.

**Program Staff:**

The Kenan program team consists of four categories of paid staff: a supervisor or coordinator, who is the liaison between the Kenan project and the school district; an early childhood instructor; an early childhood classroom assistant; and an adult education instructor.

**Elements in Program Effectiveness:**

Parents and Children Together (PACT) gives parents the opportunity to learn new ways of interacting with their children, with a particular focus on education activities.

Parent Time, when parents can be together as a group without their children, helps parents to develop a sense of trust in the teachers and in each other, and to develop a sense of belonging in the group. This secure environment enables adults to discuss personal education and career goals.

Combining an early childhood program with an adult education program in the same site addresses the child care needs of parents who want to return to school, provides quality educational experience for children who otherwise would not be in school, and adds an extra incentive for parents to stay in the program.

Evaluation Activities:

*Effects on Parent Literacy*

Scores from the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) indicate gains in reading, language, and mathematics skills for participating adults:

- Reading: 59% of parents gained more than one grade level while enrolled, and 29% gained more than two grade levels;
- Mathematics: 71% gained more than one grade level, 48% gained more than two grade levels, and 24% gained more than three grade levels;
- Language: 80% gained more than one grade level, 55% gained more than two grade levels, and 45% gained more than three grade levels.

In addition to these test scores, the program has evidence of positive outcomes on attaining the GED certificate. During the 1988-89 school year, 10% of enrolled adults received their GED certificate and another 20% had taken part of the test by the end of the year. Evaluation activities also include parent interviews that assess changes in attitudes towards education and literacy.

*Effects on Children*

To measure program outcomes for children, the program uses two High/Scope measures: the Child Observation Record and the Child Assessment Record. Results indicate that children are better prepared for kindergarten:

- At program entry, the children were proficient in 21% of the cognitive areas associated with kindergarten; at the end of the year, children were proficient on an average of 88% of the skills areas, even though more than one third of the children were a year younger than kindergarten entry age.

*Evaluation Reports:*

Hayes, Andrew E. (July 1989). William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust Family Literacy Project: Final project report. Wilmington NC: The University of North Carolina at Wilmington, School of Education.

## PROJECT AHEAD
## (Accelerating Home Education and Development)
## SCLC/MLK Legacy Association and
## Los Angeles Unified School District, California

> **"Our quality of life depends on**
> **our quality of education."**
> **—Martin Luther King, Jr.**

**Program Context:**

Operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Project AHEAD has worked with parents of public school children in south central Los Angeles (Watts) since 1977. Since 1987, AHEAD has been located in ten elementary schools, known as PHABO schools (predominantly Hispanic, black, Asian, and other non-Anglo elementary schools). Under court order, these 100% minority schools receive additional resources to compensate for the negative effects of racial isolation.

The community is characterized by high crime rates, drug and substance abuse, youth gang activity, and violence. Most families are chronically unemployed and receiving welfare.

AHEAD is a parent-to-parent program, with parent educators indigenous to the community making biweekly home visits and facilitating monthly parent cluster meetings in the schools. AHEAD's 100% minority staff match the race and ethnicity of their clients; meetings and materials are available in Spanish as well as English.

All families whose children attend the Ten Schools Program are eligible, with parents of children in prekindergarten through third grade as the primary population. Parents of children in grades four through six may attend school cluster meetings but do not receive home visits. In 1988-89, 691 families with 1,033 children in prekindergarten through third grade participated. Fifty-five percent of the families were Hispanic and 45 percent were black.

**Program Activities:**

AHEAD offers five basic services:

*Home Visits*

Every two weeks, the family educator visits parents for half an hour. The visit focuses on the monthly Appetizer (see next section) or a school-related event (e.g., reviewing report cards, preparing for the parent-teacher conference). The family educator also asks about what transpired during the week and suggests what to work on next (e.g., writing letters for the first grader, reading aloud by the third grader). The parent is urged to come to school and to attend the cluster meeting. Home visit topics are the same across all family educators, but the specifics vary with the family. Educators change the agenda if there is a crisis in the home (e.g., running out of food stamps two days early).

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| *Appetizers* | Appetizers offer learning activities for parents and children to do at home. They are derived in part from the "home learning recipes" of Dorothy Rich's Megaskills (a home curriculum designed to build ten skills crucial to children's success in school, e.g., confidence, responsibility, initiative, perseverence). Appetizers are also tied into specific school and academic activities (e.g., getting ready for parent/teacher conferences, having children read aloud, asking children about what they have read). The Appetizers are illustrated with cartoon figures, use large print, and contain simple sentences. |
| *Cluster Meetings* | Held monthly in each school, the one-hour parent cluster meetings are led by the school's family educators and focus on a topic from Dorothy Rich's Megaskills. |
| *Special Events* | The one-day Mid-Year Skills Event, open to all children and parents, assesses children's performance level and what skills children need to work on before the spring testing period. Other programs are the Summer Reading Program and the week-long summer Museum of Science program. |
| *Community Resources* | A directory of community resources is given to each family, with family educators often helping families through the assistance network. |
| Length of Participation: | Families are requested to make a two-year commitment, but families are often mobile. |
| Program Staff: | AHEAD is staffed by ten family educators (two positions were being filled at the time of the field visit), who report to the program coordinator, who in turn reports to the program director. The AHEAD director reports to the program director of the Martin Luther King Legacy Association. All staff are either black or Hispanic. Family educators are parents from the community whose children are successful in school. |
| Program Development: | Begun by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Project AHEAD is a parent-to-parent program, based on the ideas of Dorothy Rich, who subsequently incorporated the ideas into Megaskills. It was funded initially by CETA (1977-79) before being picked up by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). AHEAD uses the Megaskills topics (e.g., confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility) as organizing themes in home visits and cluster meetings and in its own materials. Materials are adapted to fit the literacy and language skills of parents. |
| Program Goals: | Specific goals for Project AHEAD include:<br>• increase parental participation in and responsibility for the ongoing educational development of their children;<br>• develop an ongoing and positive attitude toward learning between parent and child;<br>• promote effective school/home relations; and<br>• improve student attitude toward learning. |
| Funding Sources: | Most funds come from state desegregation funds transmitted to the (LAUSD). The rest of the funding is equally divided between the Martin Luther King Legacy Association and LAUSD. |

**Elements in Program Effectiveness:** AHEAD's key to success is being an indigenous program that began in the community, and had strong community support well before school district funding. Family educators are welcome in people's homes, whereas school people and those from public agencies often are not.

Because family educators come from the community and are sensitive to ethnicity and culture, they can build trusting relationships with parents.

Home visits are essential. Families feel powerful in their homes and react well to family educators there. After a series of home visits, parents are more willing to go to cluster meetings and other activities.

Respect and caring for parents and their children helps enable disadvantaged families to alter home environments and become more engaged with schools.

**Evaluation Activities:** Based upon the 1987-88 and 1988-89 evaluations conducted by the Los Angeles Unified School District:

*Effects on Children* Parents and teachers felt that children's academic achievement and self-esteem had improved, with parents' views slightly more positive than teachers'. Parents and teachers felt that there was improvement in children's work habits and attitudes toward learning (1987-88).

Parents and teachers noted positive changes in pupils' grades and test scores, self-esteem, attitude toward learning, work habits, and attendance. Teachers witnessed improvements in classroom participation, homework completion, discipline problems, attention to lessons, and racial hostility (1988-89).

*Effects on Schools* Nine of the ten principals were satisfied or highly satisfied with the program, although problems with AHEAD staff turnover were mentioned by half of the principals (1988-89).

*Effects on Parents* Teachers reported an increase in parental involvement with the child and the school. Three-fourths of AHEAD parents attended at least one cluster meeting, 23% belonged to a school organization, 42% volunteered to help at school, and 98% attended a parent-teacher conference (1988-89).

AHEAD keeps detailed records on the amount of contact hours each parent educator has spent with each family for home visits and cluster meetings and maintains parent evaluation forms on each cluster meeting.

*Evaluation Reports* Los Angeles Unified School District (1989). Integration Evaluation Reports 1987-88. Los Angeles: Program Evaluation and Assessment Branch.

Los Angeles Unified School District (1990). Integration Evaluation Reports 1988-89. Los Angeles: Program Evaluation and Assessment Branch.

# FAMILY STUDY INSTITUTE: STUDYING AT HOME/ READING AT HOME COURSES
## ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
## Chicago, Illinois

> **"In this program, we are all teachers."**
> **--Parent participant**

Program Context:

Since 1985, the Family Study Institute (FSI ) has implemented the Studying at Home and Reading at Home courses in more than 50 schools, primarily public elementary schools in Chicago. Most of the schools are Chapter 1 schools that serve a high proportion of low-income and minority families. Courses are offered in English and Spanish. Course materials are available in Spanish. Parent groups have been conducted in other languages (e.g., Chinese, Urdu) with the help of parent translators.

FSI courses primarily serve elementary school families. There are no eligibility requirements and participation is voluntary. Parents are recruited through flyers sent home from the school.

More than 4,500 families have participated in FSI courses over the last five years. From 10 to 80 families have attended at individual schools, with an average of 40-50 families. In 1989-90, an average of 40 families participated in 56 schools.

Program Activities/ Components:

The two FSI parent education courses, Studying at Home and Reading at Home, follow a similar format. Each course is based on a written curriculum that is presented to parents in three 60-90 minute group sessions at the school. At the end of the set of three sessions, parents "graduate" in a special ceremony in which they receive a diploma signed by the principal.

*Group Parent Training*

At each session, volunteers lead small groups of parents ( ten or fewer ) through the written curriculum material. The parents follow the curriculum material in a booklet as the Parent Group Leader reads it aloud. At different points in the reading, parents are asked to participate by answering questions, engaging in an activity, recounting a personal experience.

*Home Activities*

Each session introduces home tasks or activities to be carried out by the parents during the subsequent week. The activities are modeled with the parents during each week's session.

*Parent Discussion*

Part of each session is devoted to discussion of parents' experiences at home with the previous week's home activity assignment.

*Curriculum Content*

The Studying at Home course emphasizes:

- establishing a regular time and place for study at home;
- using the Help•Check•Praise method for parents to use with their child to build good study habits;
- using learning charts and assignment notebooks as focal points for parent-child communication about school;

- the importance of active listening at home;
- how to organize family meetings; and
- the importance of a parent's "golden moments" with their children.

The Reading at Home course emphasizes:

- helping parents develop their children's verbal skills and habits of reading;
- storytelling techniques for families to develop children's interest in words, characters, plots, listening;
- the importance of talking about reading;
- keeping reading journals;
- using the Help•Check•Praise to develop the child's reading habits;
- family visits to the library;
- the family reading together; and
- the principles of "reading to learn."

*Modeling and Reinforcement*

FSI uses reinforcement techniques to promote parent participation in the development of self-confidence and self-esteem. In the parent education sessions, parents receive concrete awards for participation (pins, pencils, mugs, ribbons); parent group leaders also lead the parents in applause each time one of the participants contributes to the discussion. In the training sessions for the parent group leaders, FSI staff also carefully model the processes and interactions FSI wants to occur in the sessions, i.e., active listening.

**Length of Participation:**

Parents attend an FSI course once a week for three weeks.

**Program Staff:**

*Staffed by Parent Volunteers*

FSI courses are implemented at each school by the parents themselves. The principal of each participating school nominates a Leadership Team of one staff member and two parents, who attend a one-day training session conducted by FSI staff. The school's Leadership Team then trains ten volunteer parents from the school as the Parent Group Leaders, who lead the parent participants through the course.

**Program Development:**

The Studying at Home course was developed in 1985 and Reading at Home in 1987. The courses were developed by Sam Redding, director of the Academic Development Institute (ADI), a nonprofit corporation based in Chicago and funded by grants from corporations and private foundations. ADI was founded to assist families, schools, and communities with the academic and personal development of children. FSI is the parent education program which offers the two parent education courses.

**Program Goals:**

The FSI parent education courses are intended to:

*Home Environment*

- help parents establish a home environment that encourages learning and academic achievement; and

*School Community*

- assist schools in developing communities that support children's learning.

**Funding Sources:**

Grants from national and Chicago-based private foundations and Chicago-based corporations were dominant funding sources in piloting and developing the program. These sources are now secondary to fees paid by the local schools ($1,300 in 1989-90), usually through Chapter 1 federal funds.

**Elements in Program Effectiveness:**

FSI effectively uses parent-to-parent teaching.

The training and support provided to schools is well-organized, extremely clear and specific, and models the expected processes.

The program imposes minimal burden on schools because of the high level of structure and organization of the courses.

The program does not put parents in roles in which they cannot be competent; the parent's role and the teacher's role are kept separate--the parent is not expected to teach subject matter to child.

The program can be used with all types of parents, including parents whose first language is not English, parents who are low-literate, and parents who have had little contact with the school.

**Evaluation Activities:**

*Effects on Children*

Two evaluations have been conducted on effects on children of parent participation in FSI courses. An independent evaluation tracked achievement test scores for 140 second through eighth graders in ten elementary schools whose parents had completed an FSI course during the 1986-87 school year. The students' reading and math scores from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills showed NCE gains of 0.91 and 1.60 points, respectively; in the year prior to the course, the same children had shown decreases in reading and math of -6.14 and -3.12 points, respectively.

In 1987-88, ADI field-tested a research design matching 24 children of parents in the FSI program with 24 children of parents not in the program. The students were matched by sex and classroom in three Chicago public schools. On the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the treatment group children gained 2.83 NCEs in reading comprehension and 5.54 NCEs in math, compared with 0.54 and 4.59 NCEs for the comparison group.

For an additional group of 75 students from the same three schools whose parents completed the FSI course, NCE gains on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were 8.73 in reading comprehension and 7.79 in math. (Gains on the test in the year prior to the FSI course were 0.62 NCEs in reading comprehension and 5.91 NCEs in math.)

*Evaluation Reports*

H.J. Walberg and Wallace, T. (February 1988). An evaluation of the "Studying at Home" course of the Family Study Institute. Chicago: Academic Development Institute.

Academic Development Institute (Spring 1988). A Report on the Family Study Institute. Chicago.

# MCALLEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
## McAllen Independent School District
## McAllen, Texas

> **"All children can learn**
> **and together we can make a difference."**
> **–Motto of McAllen Independent School District**
> **McAllen, Texas**

**Program Context:**

McAllen, Texas, is located seven miles from the Rio Grande River, which serves as the international boundary between Texas and Mexico. The McAllen Independent School District has approximately 22,000 students. During the school years 1980-86, between 62% and 64% of students were from low-income families. More than 86% of the students are Hispanic. Each year a large number of families arrive from Mexico, with limited or no ability to speak English.

All parents in the district are eligible to participate in some component of the Parental Involvement Program. Program activities are held more frequently for families of Chapter 1 regular and Chapter 1 migrant children. The Evening Study Centers are targeted at migrants, Chapter 1 children, and at-risk students based on grade retention, limited English proficiency, or teacher recommendation.

Each of the five parent involvement coordinators sees an estimated 500 families during the school year through core activities, such as the Evening Study Centers, STEP/PECES, and monthly parent groups. In addition, parents are involved in individual school activities such as the PTA, school volunteers, and grade-level meetings. Overall, 90% of the parents in the district are estimated to participate in school activities.

The majority of program activities take place in neighborhood schools, using available classroom space and school libraries. Program activities also are held in community buildings and participants' homes. For example, parent groups for migrant families are held in a meeting room of the housing authority at a migrant housing project.

**Program Activities:**

There are three intensive parent involvement activities that form the core of the McAllen program–STEP/PECES, Evening Study Centers, and ongoing group parent meetings:

*Parent Education*

STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) is a commercially available curriculum designed to help parents learn effective and enjoyable ways to communicate with their children. PECES (Padres Eficaces Con Entrenamiento Sistematico) is the Spanish version of the curriculum series. Parents meet once a week for an hour and a half over the course of six weeks in STEP/PECES sessions offered at each school in the district. The curriculum covers topics such as understanding children's behavior, building children's self-confidence, communicating with children, and using discipline to develop responsibility.

*Evening Study Centers*

The Evening Study Centers offer classes for at-risk students and their parents two evenings a week at three school sites. Activities for parents focus on learning English as a second language, parenting skills and computer literacy. Activities for children include help with homework, use of computers, and enrichment activities such as art and drama.

*Group Meetings*

Parental involvement coordinators organize group parent meetings in each school in the district throughout the year. Examples of topics include health and hygiene, information on new curricula for the district, and "make and take" sessions where parents create games and other home activities. Parent groups also utilize a curriculum entitled "Keys for a Better Life," which was developed by a parent involvement coordinator to help parents increase positive family communication. The seven "keys" are: faith, enthusiasm, self-confidence, imagination, communication, determination and love.

*Other Activities*

There also are several broad-based programs and activities in the district that encourage parents' participation in their children's education, including a parent contract, radio talk show, and school volunteer program. In addition, individual schools select parental involvement projects, such as Project Self-Esteem, and ongoing activities such as newsletters. Community involvement in public education is facilitated by the Partners in Excellence Program.

**Program Staff:**

McAllen has a director of parental involvement, who oversees the program. Program activities are run by five parent involvement coordinators with assistance from paraprofessional community aides. Each coordinator has responsibility for between five and seven schools in the district.

**Program Development:**

The Parental Involvement Program started as one component of the district's Chapter 1 program. Last year, the Parent Involvement Program was expanded to include all parents in the district. In the spirit of effective schools and school-based management, each school principal must develop an annual plan incorporating parent and community involvement objectives.

**Program Goals:**

The district has a strong commitment to family-centered education and home-school partnerships, which are reflected in the following goals of the Parental Involvement Program:

- provide effective and positive communication between schools, home, and the community;
- promote parent and community involvement so that parents and community members become effective partners in the improvement of McAllen schools; and
- provide parenting education, awareness, and training programs and activities that are beneficial for parents and their children.

**Funding Sources:**

The total operating budget for the Parental Involvement Program for the 1989-90 school year was $318,211, of which approximately 25% was from school district funds and 75% from federal Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 monies.

**Elements in Program Effectiveness:**

Strong instructional leadership and support: The superintendent is credited by staff and parents as the catalyst for change, who has incorporated parent involvement as a key goal of the district. Principals at each school have responsibility for implementing parent involvement activities, allowing school-building ownership and flexibility of programs.

Bilingual staff: All of the parent involvement staff are bilingual. Many of the program and district staff, including the superintendent, grew up in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and share the same cultural heritage as the at-risk families with whom they work.

Parents have the opportunity to be involved in a variety of roles--teachers, learners, supporters, advocates, and decisionmakers, and to choose different levels of involvement--occasional, weekly, daily.

Comprehensive, ongoing information for parents about opportunities for participation is available in both English and Spanish and does not require advanced literacy skills.

There is active community involvement in and support of public education. More than 200 local businesses participate in the Partners in Excellence Adopt-a-School Program that provides direct financial help and in-kind contributions for school activities.

**Evaluation Activities:**

Until this past year, the Parental Involvement Program was under the direction of federal programs, and formal evaluation activities focused primarily on student testing and the outcomes of Chapter 1 classroom instruction. Students in grades two through five were tested on the California Achievement Test in reading and math.

A questionnaire was given to parents who had participated in the STEP/PECES program to find out their attitudes toward the value of education and the importance of parental involvement.

# Telephone Interview Program Sites

| | **Project FIEL** (Family Initiative for English Literacy)<br>El Paso Community College<br>El Paso, TX | **PREP**<br>Mascoutah Unit School District #19<br>Mascoutah, IL |
|---|---|---|
| Target Population | LEP families with at-risk children<br>Focus on kindergarteners; then on 1st graders | Families in township with 4-year-olds who are at risk, based on screening test<br>Includes a large number of military families |
| Program Sites | 8 elementary schools in El Paso - 32 classrooms | Classes are held in local high school |
| Number of Families Served | 250 families in 1989-90 | 50 families per year (4 groups of 10-15 parent/child pairs meeting on a different day each week) |
| Program Components/ Activities | **Weekly parent/child literacy classes**, including:<br>• large group meeting<br>• hands-on learning activity in small groups focusing on language development; includes a storywriting activity<br>• storybook demonstration<br>• home activity choices | Weekly 1 1/2 hour **parent/child classes** including:<br>• teacher leads parents in guided observation of children in small group and large group activities with 2-way mirror<br>• parent education session<br>• home activities 6 weekly reinforcement and review activities to do at home, which are discussed in group |
| Length of Program | 12 weeks (families may repeat program) | Full school year |
| Staff | All staff have professional background and are bilingual<br>Instructors lead parent/child classes (teachers from elementary schools)<br>2 teacher trainers: work with instructors (from El Paso Community College)<br>Community liaison in charge of recruitment | Early Childhood Teacher (certified ECE teacher)<br>Parent Instructor (certified ECE teacher)<br>6 high school students as aides |
| Program Goals | To bring parents and children together to improve parent and child literacy skills<br>To enhance the ability of LEP parents to assist their child's literacy development | To improve the development of at-risk children<br>To improve parents' self-esteem<br>To help parents' work with children |
| Program Development | Developed at El Paso Community College as a family literacy model for a bilingual community<br>Pilot project implemented in 1986 | Adopted by school district in 1976 from NDN model program in Redford, MI |
| Sources of Funding | Title VII funds to community college | School district funds (Chapter 1 and local) |
| Elements in Program Effectiveness | Innovative classroom management<br>Nontraditional class composition<br>Well-articulated bilingual literacy curriculum<br>College link attracts highly qualified staff | Guided observations of teacher/child interactions<br>Modeling and discussion of home activities |
| Evaluation Activities | Ongoing formative observation; ethnographic studies which suggest changes in family literacy patterns | Pre-post developmental testing of children<br>Feedback from parents twice yearly<br>Anecdotal reports from school staff concerning performance of PREP graduates |

| | **Prestame Una Comadre**<br>State Department of Children and Family Services<br>Springfield, IL | **Syracuse Pre-Kindergarten Program**<br>Syracuse City School Districts<br>Syracuse, NY |
|---|---|---|
| Target Population | Mexican-American migrant farm workers who have children in Head Start who show delays. Families must be:<br>• native Spanish speakers<br>• judged to have low coping abilities | Families in district with 3 or 4 year olds that meet income eligibility requirements (elig. for free or reduced-price lunches) |
| Program Sites | 3 migrant Head Start sites in Illinois during federal discretionary grant period; currently 2 sites | 27 classrooms in city: school buildings, churches, housing projects, community centers |
| Number of Families Served | 5 - 10 families per site | 900 children per year |
| Program Components/ Activities | **Home visits 3x per week** from the Family Life Trainer or "comadre" (special friend) who introduces home activities.<br>**Weekly small group meetings** - parent ed topics of parents' choosing | Children attend **early childhood program** 5 half days per week<br>**Weekly parent group session:** 2x a month, parents only (parent ed. led by social worker); 2x a month, parent/child class (led by ECE teacher)<br>**Home visits**: annually and as needed.<br>Some parents recruited and trained as paid **classroom aides** |
| Length of Program | 5 months of the year (harvest season) | Full school year |
| Staff | Program advisor-supervises, trains comadres; professional background<br>Family life trainers--Hispanic; with BA; 1 trainer for 6 families | ECE certified teachers (27)<br>Teacher assistants (27)<br>Parent involvement coordinators (3)<br>Hispanic community liaison<br>Instructional specialists (3)<br>Psychologists (2)<br>Speech pathologists (4)<br>Nurses (2) |
| Program Goals | Work with small percent of families in Head Start who take up most of social workers' time<br>Enhance parent self-concept and personal development and improve family relationships<br>Reinforce childrens' Head Start classroom experience | Well-rounded preschool experience for disadvantaged children<br>Increase children's self-confidence<br>Increase parents' self-esteem |
| Program Development | Family Services Coordinator of Illinois Migrant Head Start developed program to help most needy families<br>Half-time: 1984-87<br>Full-time since 1987 | 1965 - local group developed pilot program with local and federal money<br>1966 - State took over funding as part of statewide pre-K program |
| Sources of Funding | Federal funds (75%), state funds (25%) during federal discretionary grant period; currently 100% state | State Dept. of Education funds (75%), county and local school district funds |
| Elements in Program Effectiveness | Completely individualized, flexible curriculum<br>Intensive work with families<br>Encouragement of relationship with "comadre"<br>Realistic goals for families | Individualized teacher design - - flexible and responsive<br>Staff who are high-qualified, committed<br>Reaching out to parents in a variety of ways |
| Evaluation Activities | Ongoing assessment of accomplishment of family objectives | Local clinical evaluation: teacher observation, anecdotal records; developmental testing done in pre-K, K and 1<br>Evaluation of state pre-K program indicated (1) significant difference between program and comparison children in achievement, absences, retention, need for special ed., thru grade 7; (2) children of parents who were more actively involved scored better. (*Final Report. Evaluation of the New York State Experimental Pre-kindergarten Program.* University of the State of New York, for the State Education Department, Albany, NY. 1982) |

| | **Academia del Pueblo**<br>Guadalupe Center, Inc.<br>Kansas City, MO | **Kuban Parent Involvement Program**<br>Kuban Elementary School<br>Phoenix, AZ |
|---|---|---|
| **Target Population** | Targets LEP children grades K-4 in center's service area, who are experiencing academic or behavior problems in school | All families with children in the school (K-6th); inner-city school with poor test scores, high dropout, many low-income families |
| **Program Sites** | Program sited in local community center; special reading program held at local university | Kuban Elementary School |
| **Number of Families Served** | Up to 50 children and their families per year | Participation at meetings ranges from 90-150 parents (out of 200); 70 - 80% of parents participate in activities during year |
| **Program Components/ Activities** | **Tutoring for children 2x per week** for 2 1/2 hours, focused on language arts and reading, math and problem solving and enrichment<br>**Weekly parent discussion groups** - for LEP parents<br>**Monthly parent education groups** - lectures by experts<br>**Family literacy and reading comprehension classes** 3x per week - story writing, home literacy activities (offered by local university)<br>**Parent contract** | **Parent Training sessions** 4x per year run by teachers; parents rotate among teachers to discuss curriculum, goals, how parent can help; may include hands-on activities<br>**Enrichment activities** 4 x per year<br>**Home visits** annually and as-needed<br>Classroom teachers have additional training for parents in their individual classrooms |
| **Length of Program** | 3 sessions: fall, spring, summer; families expected to participate for at least 2 sessions. Families may participate more than 1 year. | Throughout school year; parents participate on a session-by-session basis |
| **Staff** | Parent educators (2) - (certified in bilingual ed.)<br>Child educators (2) - (certified teachers)<br>Tutors - Hispanic high school students<br>50% of teachers are bilingual<br>Education director<br>Parent coordinator | Staffed by school's teachers<br>2 teachers assigned positions as coordinators of parent involvement |
| **Program Goals** | To assist Hispanic children to perform at grade level<br>To involve parents in their child's education and support their skills to do so<br>To increase children's and parents' self-esteem | Increase parent involvement in and presence at school<br>Provide parent training on helping with homework<br>Improve parent attitudes about themselves and school |
| **Program Development** | Model developed by the National Council of La Raza (organization to improve education for Hispanics)<br>Seed grant to a Guadalupe Center, a multiservice Hispanic community organization, in 1986-87 | Developed by school staff in 1986-87 to address poor student performance and low parent participation<br>Originally focused on K-3; in 1987-88 extended to grade 6, and 1990-91 will extend thru grade 8 |
| **Sources of Funding** | La Raza (15%), United Way (17%), school district (10%), private funding (60%), parents pay $5 per child per year | Minimal costs funded from school budget |
| **Elements in Program Effectiveness** | Links to schools: principals, teachers refer students<br>Tutoring for elementary students<br>Encouragment of family support | Involvement of all teachers |
| **Evaluation Activities** | La Raza conducting formal evaluation looking at child performance in school | Principal reports improvement in attendance, discipline referrrals, grades, state achievement tests scores |

| | **FAMILY MATH**<br>University of California, Berkeley, CA | **Parents in Touch**<br>Indianapolis, IN |
|---|---|---|
| **Target Population** | Targets students in grades K-8 and their families<br>No eligibility requirements<br>Implemented with minority and Spanish groups | All families and students (K-12) in district<br>Individual schools elect whether or not to participate in some programs |
| **Program Sites** | Classes occurring in schools and community agencies in 46 states, as well as in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Sweden and South Africa | 86 schools in district; all must offer parent/teacher conferences; other services are optional |
| **Number of Families Served** | Estimated at more than 75,000 parents and children (37,000 families); 11,000 have attended leadership workshops | School district has 50,000 students: 50% black |
| **Program Components/ Activities** | Weekly **parent/child classes:**<br>• involve families in problem-solving activities<br>• use hands-on materials<br>• encourage collaborative learning<br>• present role models<br>• discuss math concepts and activities and the importance of math for future<br>**Home math activities** to reinforce, extend classes<br>Classes last for 1.5 hours on average | **Parent/Teacher conferences**<br>**Activity Calendars** by grade level, includes home activities<br>**Student/Parent /Teacher Contract**<br>**Folders for students' work**<br>**Dial-A-Teacher**-- homework assistance<br>**Homework Hotline**-- live, call-in TV program to help with math assignments<br>**Parent Line/Communicator** --taped messages<br>**Parent Focus Series**--parent ed. seminars<br>**Family Math Program**<br>**TIPS-Math** |
| **Length of Program** | 4 - 6 week cycle | Throughout school year |
| **Staff** | Staffed by volunteers (teachers and parents), who attend Family Math leadership workshops to prepare them to teach classes<br>26 sites nationally offer workshops<br>Staff at U. of Calif. direct national dissemenation and curriculum development | Project manager<br>Teacher on special assignment in charge of home/school liaison and workshops<br>Dissemination specialist |
| **Program Goals** | To help parents and children to learn and enjoy math together<br>To increase access of low-income, minority and non-English speaking families to math<br>To involve parents as active partners in their child's education<br>To assist parents to understand child's developmental needs and to act as advocates<br>To connect math to everyday life | To provide 3-way communication between parents, teachers, students<br>Impove students' attendance, adjustment<br>Help parents see a role for themselves with their children<br>Increase public awareness<br>Provide staff training in working with parents<br>Increase parent involvement in schools, education |
| **Program Development** | Created in 1981 with federal funds at request of teacher involved in mathematics/equity inservice program<br>Classes and sites developed throughout California, nationally, and abroad beginning in 1983 and continuing to the present<br>Expansion in 1985, with federal funds, to community-based organizations serving Hispanic, African-American, and American Indian families. Publication of FAMILY MATH book in 1986 (Spanish translation 1987)<br>Initiation of "Matematica Para La Familia" in 1989 for Spanish-speaking families | School district received foundation grant in 1979 to conduct parent involvement activities on a systemwide basis.<br>New programs instituted each year since then |

| | **FAMILY MATH** (continued)<br>University of California, Berkeley, CA | **Parents In Touch** (continued)<br>Indianapolis, IN |
|---|---|---|
| Sources of Funding | Program development and expansion at Berkeley funded by the US Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The State of California, and the University of California at Berkeley<br>Funding sources vary at individual sites | School district funds development of districtwide resources<br>Individual schools must provide funding for some programs |
| Elements in Program Effectiveness | Parents becoming teachers of math and collaborating with teachers to teach classes<br>Teachers becoming school leaders through involvement in the program<br>Supportive, nonthreatening approach to learning math<br>Household materials used to teach math; activities extended and repeated at home<br>Modeling a way for parents to help their children enjoy and understand math | Total community approach to parent involvement |
| Evaluation Activities | Two federally funded studies to evaluate impact and a number of local evaluations indicate a high degree of acceptance of program methods and materials by families of diverse race, culture, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status<br>(Shields, P.M. and David, J.L., 1988. *The implementation of FAMILY MATH in five community agencies.* Report for the University of California, Berkeley)<br>Teachers report improved understanding of math concepts by students in program; parent reports indicate more positive attitudes toward involvement in school activities as a result of the program | No formal evaluation<br>Principal reports of improved achievement and attendance |

| | **TIPS-Math** (**Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork**)<br>The Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools<br>Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD | **Activity and Toy Lending Program**<br>State of Maryland |
|---|---|---|
| Target Population | Families with students K-8<br>Program meant to be useful to **all** students and families | Varies by district; often targeted to Chapter 1 parents |
| Program Sites | Sites request materials from TIPS program | Implemented in a number of school districts in Maryland |
| Number of Families Served | Unknown; varies by site | Unknown |
| Program Components/ Activities | TIPS-Math activities are **homework assignments** that include communications from teachers to parents to inform and involve them<br>Components in each home assignment:<br>• Look This Over: sample of work from teacher that explains skills students are working on<br>• Try These Together: sample problems<br>• Check This: answers to sample problems<br>• Student Homework Assignment<br>• Challenge or some other option<br>• Parent Response: home to school communication<br>Schools adapt prototype activities to their own math curriculum | ABT Lending Library is an educational resource center to provide enrichment activities to support curriculum. Delivered in two ways:<br>**Club System** -- parent sign contracts and child receives kit (weekly or biweekly) of materials for home activities; materials may be matched by teacher to child's specific skill needs<br>**Library Check-out System**-- parent resource center provides materials |
| Length of Program | Depends on school site;<br>Assignments may go home weekly or biweekly for a designated period | Materials available for schoolyear and summer home activities |
| Staff | Teachers, parents and students | Each school responsible for program operation<br>In Chapter 1 schools, community liaison runs program<br>In other schools, run by parent volunteers |
| Program Goals | To provide a process that involves parents in their children's math homework<br>To provide schools with a regular communication method for math homework<br>To motivate students by having them share the importance of their schoolwork with their families | To help children develop skills to succeed in school<br>To enhance parent-child relationship<br>To increase parent interest in child's schoolwork<br>To increase parent/school interaction |
| Program Development | Developed at Johns Hopkins Center with teachers in 1987, based on research showing link between subject-specific teachers' practices in parent involvement and student achievement/gains in subject<br>Also available for science; being developed for language arts | Developed in Frederick County in 1980 as Chapter 1 summer home activity program<br>Adopted by state in 1981 to be offered to all districts; reduced state involvement now, with implementation at school building initiative |
| Sources of Funding | School sites pay for materials ($4.50 for manual; $3 each set of prototypes) schools fund own adaption and production of homework sheets for students | Funded by local school systems with start-up money from state |
| Elements in Program Effectiveness | Well-articulated plans for homework assignments<br>Opportunity for type of involvement parents request most in surveys<br>Supports teachers' efforts to increase learning | Early implemented by local school sites |

| | **TIPS-Math** (Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork) (continued)<br>The Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools<br>Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD | **Activity and Toy Lending Program** (continued)<br>State of Maryland |
|---|---|---|
| Evaluation Activities | No formal evaluation<br>Informal surveys and accounts from parents and teachers indicate high approval<br>Local site evaluation (Creve Coeur, Il), showed strong parent participation among uneducated parents (Mullen, B.L. (1989). *Implementation of parent Involvement in Math Program in Creve Coeur Schools, Creve Coeur, Illinois.* Paper presented at annual meeting of AERA, San Francisco, CA) | Parent surveys administered in 5 counties; parents felt program had positive effect on their relationship with their children |

# APPENDIX C

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

### ECFE Program

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## Appendix C
(continued)

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## Appendix C
(continued)

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